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MAXIMS

BY

A MAN OF THE WORLD.



MAXIMS

BY

A MAN OF THE WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“LOST SIR MASSINGBERD,” “BLONDEL PARVA,”

ETC. ETC.



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TO

G. V. Y.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.

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MAXIMS

BY

A MAN OF THE WORLD.

IF the fastidious reader is not quite satisfied with the title of the following papers, he and their author are so far agreed. "Maxims" too commonly pretentious, and yet dull, are not in general an attractive sort of literature: while the term "a Man of the World" is generally applied to one whose absence the world may not only easily endure, but be all the better for it. Still, it was necessary to fix upon some title for a series of occasional papers which should convey the experience of one well versed in human affairs to his fellow-creatures, and as that most fitting one of "Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher," has been pitched upon by a previous writer, it was necessary to select some other. In intention at least we are equal to

Solomon, since our object is to teach folks "How to get on in the World ;" and without acknowledging the authority of the audacious "J. P. Robinson, he" (of the *Biglow Papers*), to the effect "that they didn't know everything down in Judee," it must be allowed that during the many centuries which have intervened since the days of the wisest of kings, the ocean of life has a good deal altered, and that the mariner (notwithstanding thirty-six editions of Mr. Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy*) needs a new chart to steer by.

Many an old inlet has been silted up, many a new one found ; islands of promise have sunk, and others risen ; rocks against which the ancient galleys split have no existence, while others present themselves jagged and perilous as ever ; some, again, though standing, have so changed their shape that they are no longer recognisable ; while everywhere beneath the treacherous surface lurk new dangers, not seldom without even a breaking wave to mark them.

M O N E Y.

IN accordance with the taste of the time, we place this subject first.

The acquisition of money is of great, but not of paramount importance. You may, in City phrase, be a very "warm" man, and yet have purchased that flattering title by the sacrifice of all that is worth living for—Love, Friendship, Health, and all the finer capabilities of pleasure. You may be "good for one hundred thousand pounds," and yet, in the judgment of all whose opinion is worth having, be a wretched bankrupt. "A beast," in the expressive language of the frank and impulsive, you also do in reality resemble that sort of beast, such as a deer (although it is probable you are not so picturesque), which, while alive, is useless, but when dead will cut up remarkably fine. It is not a pleasant thing to be looked upon as venison ;

something that will some day afford a slice apiece to an immense number of ungrateful relatives, my thrifty friend (for you are just the sort of fellow to die intestate), but in the meantime is a herd-abandoned, quarrelsome, bad old buck, with whom (although anything but amorous) it seems always the amorous season.

True, few persons venture to inform you of this unpleasant fact, but you yourself well know that when you are not shunned, you are fawned upon ; that your humours are borne with not from that precious love no "plum" can buy, and which is blind to faults, but from the greed that speculates upon your dying hour. Nay, it may happen that some expectant heir, whom you have worried out of all patience, may turn like the trodden worm, and tell you for once the truth.

There was once a baronet of my acquaintance, whose title was bestowed upon him, I think, by George IV. (if he had made him a gentleman as well as a baronet I should have believed in the Divine Right of Kings), a gross, rude, ignorant man, but whose money grew and grew like a snow-ball (except that it never melted), and it was all his

own, both to hold and leave behind him. Now, this man had a certain slave, his nephew, who bore with his black looks, his biting words, his cruel caprices, as long as Jacob toiled for Leah, expecting to get Rachel. Seven years of bondage, and at the end of them this reward—Sir Plutus, shaking his own fat sides with mocking laughter, made him the confidant of *his approaching marriage*. The wretched young man, driven by these tidings to despair, and writhing under the immediate lash of his uncle's scorn, determined—like some criminal condemned to die upon the morrow, who sups *en prince*—to enjoy himself for one brief quarter of an hour, come what might. So he told Sir Plutus *what he thought of him*, without softening a single adjective, or picking out delicate synonyms for his nouns. Heliogabalus (for the baronet was a great eater), always accustomed to dainty dishes, and a total stranger to plain food of this sort, literally choked with indignation, fell into a fit upon the spot, and died. Sir Scatter-cash (the nephew, and one of the last occupants, by-the-bye, of the King's Bench Prison) used always to speak of this incident (which gave him ten

thousand a year) with pathetic regret: "I might have saved myself seven years of slavery—for my uncle was always of that full habit—by telling the truth at once."

Surely, no man would wish to be a Sir Plutus. "Getting on in the world," notwithstanding there is a growing opinion to the contrary, is not a convertible phrase for "getting money." I know a man who began life with fifteen thousand pounds, and who, notwithstanding that he well knows how "money breeds," has now but twelve thousand. I once heard a practical acquaintance of his remark upon this circumstance: "Then you have actually gone back in the world!" to which he only replied "Yes," with a pleasant smile. Now, that smile, as I happen to know, meant something as follows. He had repaired the broken fortunes of two brothers. He had acted for three wards as their man of business, putting out their little money to the best of his judgment; if the scheme prospered, they reaped all the advantage; if it failed, he paid the losses. His relatives, numerous and poor, looked up to him for counsel (ah, how different from that advice gratis which

has become a byword !) as to a wise and liberal father. Upon the road of life he had given scores of fellow-passengers a helping hand, so that they remembered the day on which they had met their unknown friend, and blessed it. All who know him honour him, especially those—and here is the crucible—of his own household. He sees (we may humbly say, although these maxims are meant but for temporal use) the Golden Gates always open before him, and his angel waiting there, crown in hand, to meet him. Do not suppose, therefore, that that diminution of his original property was only to be represented by a minus. That very smile of his—the being able so to smile, I mean—was worth (although it would have been a waste of words to try to persuade his practical acquaintance of the fact) far more than three thousand pounds. He has not “gone back in the world,” notwithstanding that pecuniary deficiency ; he has got *on* so far, and yet so smoothly and well, that he is well-nigh to Heaven.

It is by no means argued by the above narration that a man should strip himself of his means in order to help others. If you have two coats—

that is, an *overcoat*—it is well to give one away, provided that the recipient is deserving of it ; but if you have but one, I by no means recommend your reducing yourself to your shirt-sleeves. If you entertain so unselfish an impulse, it is probable that you are better fitted to wear a coat—to occupy a position, that is, of superior usefulness—than the man who has none. Money is power ; and while you have it, you may exercise a wise benevolence ; but if you part with it, in the lump, to others, it may be used by no means to the public advantage. At the same time, in giving, give largely ; not mere dribblets, which, like the slender draught that makes the drinker the more thirsty, only transforms the needy into habitual beggars.

But it may here be said : “ Spending is easy, Mr. Preacher ; tell us how to get money.” Well, that is easy enough too. If you really have your heart, or what you call your heart, resolutely fixed on money-getting, I know nothing easier ; for that master-passion destroys all other passions (as well as the virtues). He who craves for money for money’s sake will stint, and spare, and screw, and

think nothing of the inconveniences to which he submits himself; he has no other temptations who studies to be a rich man; the attention of his mind is never taken off by such trivial matters as friendship, pity, love, or the pleasures of literature or art, or science; so that, sooner or later, he is perfectly certain to succeed, and always does so. I have never known a single exception. Whether the golden fruit thus obtained is not found to be filled with ashes, after all, is quite another matter.

There are, however, so many idle people in the world, and so many more merely indolent and procrastinating, that every man, whatever his station, may be prosperous, if only he be diligent, and do his duty. There is no necessity for that Thrift which, in its common acceptation, means something more than Prudence. Prudent, of course, we must be. It is absolutely essential that we do not run into debt, or, what is almost as bad and more common, drift into it, no matter by what slow degrees. Sacrifice nothing to appearances. If the friendship of those people, who respect us only for what we have, is not worth winning (and it is *not*), why

struggle to *seem* to have? Carriages and horses, men-servants, and fine clothes, no, nor even the giving of dinner-parties, never yet made a true friend, although they have attracted many acquaintances; and the loss of them never lost us one who was worth keeping. To the unhappy persons who push and strive, in order to mix with those in a higher position than themselves, for no other reason than because it *is* higher—who plot and intrigue to get asked to the tables (even the *after*-dinner tables) of folk of title, I have not a word to say, even supposing they can afford the expense; how much less, then, if they can *not* afford it. I suppose myself to be addressing reasonable beings.

On your own part, however, always be hospitable. No one is so poor but that he can be *that*. The Arab who has only his black bread to offer is proverbial for hospitality. And what you have to give, give equally. Don't ask the rector to dinner, and the curate to tea upon the same evening. It is quite fashionable to do so, I am aware; but then Fashion, unless in little matters, such as the shape of a hat or a bonnet, is a bad guide, and (between ourselves) a very selfish and vulgar hussy. If you

are ever seized with a generous instinct, and there is no doubt of the fitness of its object, give way to it at once. Don't take a few hours to think about it—"a night to sleep over it"—and so forth. The shock of such an impulse never occurs twice with the same force; the best time for doing a good action is very often the only one—namely, the present. The recollection of it, especially if it has been attended with some self-denial, is a joy for ever, and worth treble the cost. The pleasant word, too, should accompany the deed, for as God loves a cheerful giver, so Man appreciates a gracious one. And do not be too solicitous about receiving gratitude in return, for that is the behaviour of the mere patron, who invests his money to be repaid in instalments of servility. I am not preaching morality, but comfort. In telling you How to get on in the World, my less-experienced friend, I am telling you how to get the most enjoyment and the least annoyance out of it; how to be truly happy at the smallest possible expense; and if my advice happens to tally with religion and morality, do not be so illiberal as to despise it upon that account. However much you may dislike sermons,

you cannot, I do assure you, listen to them with more impatience than I do myself.

The philosophers who tell us to be poor are as foolish (though scarcely more so) as the applauders of the self-made, who would have all men be rich. The true wisdom lies in the prayer of Agur, which was for neither riches nor poverty. One wishes that there was more in the Scriptures concerning this advocate of the golden mean—almost the only, what one calls, “moderate man” of his epoch. Even now his ideas are little understood, or find a crude and even vicious expression in “the rules” of trades’ unions. To possess enough, without stripping for the strife of competition, and to see others possess without envy, has both philosophy and common-sense at the bottom of it, notwithstanding that its principles are made the stalking-horse of idleness and mediocrity. We often hear of the “fatal competence” of a few hundreds a year—how it indisposes its possessor to exertion, and leads him to fold his hands, or at most, to whittle. But the fact is, that an individual of the character implied would do nothing, if he were ten times as rich; and would certainly never acquire even the “competence,” if he

were poor. Whereas, to another sort of person, a small but assured income is an incalculable advantage. It secures the Thinker from narrow cares, and sets him free to benefit his kind, besides doing away with that wretched waste of power involved in his toiling for mere sixpences. The sting of poverty is as superfluous to a man of genius as the spur to a thoroughbred.

Side by side with the "fatal competence" runs another social error—the principle that every young man, however rich, should be brought up to and even practise some profession. Now the object of joining any profession is, commonly, the getting money out of it, and, in the rich man's case, this is labouring for what he does not require. I do not say that it is robbing others, because a rich man's success—the triumph of an amateur over professionals—is so rare, that the examples of it may be disregarded; if it were otherwise, however, I do not hesitate to say that such competition would be shameful.

"But it is not to get money," contends the territorial magnate, or merchant-prince, "that I place my eldest son in a profession. It is

to keep him out of idleness, which is the root of all evil."

As if there was no sort of work to be done save wearing a wig or a sword! and in particular, as if there was not a special sort of work for this young man to do—a special training, moreover, requisite for one in whose hands the welfare of so many will one day be placed. Political economy, social justice (which includes the great labour question, the dwellings and education of the poor, and many other almost as weighty matters), and, above all, moral responsibility—some just understanding of these things in a young man of vast expectations, will be of far more consequence to those dependent on him than his having passed a few years in a cavalry regiment, or even eaten his terms and trifled in a pleader's chambers. The lawyer, the parson, the physician, do not begin to practise their trades without some elementary knowledge of them; yet the man who is called to be a landowner, or employer of labour—with duties graver than those of all the rest—has, it seems, nothing to learn. Like Dogberry's reading and writing, their performance is expected to come to him by nature, and the

consequence is, he is but too often like Dogberry in other respects.

Once more, to revert to expenditure, I need not tell you, if you are a father, and have to pay his bills, to repress in your child the tendency to be lavish with money that is not his own, or to be mischievous, extravagant, or wasteful. But, on the other hand, rebuke the earliest indications of meanness. A prudent child, a thrifty boy, a sordid man—these are too often life's stages. Now, there is nothing a liberal soul so loathes as a covetous one; a lad may be beautiful, studious, and agreeable, but he will never "get on in the world," except in that wretched sense to which I have already referred, if he is stingy; no gentleman can be his friend; no woman can really love him. He may be as brave a soldier as ever drew sword, but, like Marlborough, men will know him for a sneak, and despise him; and, unfortunately, no man can help disclosing his weakness in this respect; it crops up everywhere, notwithstanding his utmost efforts to repress it; it is as patent as the leaving out one's *h*'s.

Of course, there should be a great difference in

the liberalities of a family man and of a bachelor. If a man has no children of his own, or any near relatives in need of his money, he is not only justified, but well advised, in spending his full income. If it is the interest of capital, more need not be expected of him than to leave that capital unimpaired to his distant heirs; if it is money gained by his own exertions, it is hard, indeed, if some far-off cousin should grudge him the enjoyment of it. On the other hand, a married man who spends all his income without putting anything by for his children—that is, supposing they are not otherwise provided for—is preparing for himself a day of bitter regret, and for them an evil time indeed. They will not thank him for the unnecessary comforts, the lavish plenty of their childhood. Comparison will only make their future lot more hard to bear. Yet many a man has felt genuine pity for the friendless governess or snubbed “companion,” who makes no effort to preserve his own beloved offspring from the self-same fate. This may be owing to downright selfishness—unwillingness to curb his own expenses; or to that love which loves not wisely, but too well, and forbids him to curtail

his children's pleasures, or to impress upon them an unpleasant truth ; but more usually it is the result of indolence, dislike to change, or of procrastination. It is this last vice that causes scores of men to die intestate, or in other words to leave a legacy of grievous wrong.

LOVE.

AS there are few men who do not think that they can poke a fire and drive a gig—and (such is the inordinate conceit of human nature), I may add, play at whist—so there are few who do not flatter themselves that they have fallen in love, or, at all events, are capable of doing so upon provocation. This is an error not the less great that it is popular. Very few men ever *do* ‘fall in love’—in the usual acceptation of that phrase—and, save at a very early age, not very many are capable of it. On the other hand, those that boast themselves of being impregnable to this tender sentiment, are often among those most liable to it. The truth is, that the world in general has (for once) chosen to accept the term “love” in the exaggerated sense in which it is used by poets; a very remarkable dialectic phenomenon. Love, instead of being a

passion, is understood to be a sort of enchantment, a glamour. The victim (or whatever you please to call the person thus possessed) is supposed to see all things in a new light; the gentleman with jaundice takes all for yellow, the gentleman in love for rose-colour.

Love takes up the glass of Time, and turns it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, runs itself in golden sands.

The hours fly, the minutes flash by like gorgeous insects in the sunshine. The whole being of the lover is rapt, and spiritually incorporated in the Object. His thoughts are incessantly occupied with her, and he holds his newspaper upside down. He is always philandering after her, and takes no pleasure in the society of friends—I don't mean Quakers, of course, but in his old companions who were once so dear to him. If she has a headache, he is desolated: but it is to be observed here, that if she is attacked by the mumps, or suffers from any even less disfigurement, such as a sty in her eye, his ardour cools. Just as the enthusiasm which defies persecution oftentimes cannot resist ridi-

cule, so Love of this sort, careless of great obstacles, is apt to be quenched by a trifling incident. The threats of disinheritance are like the idle wind to the enamoured youth ; but if the Beloved Object gets a cold in her head, and her lovely nose enlarges, the father who fears his son is going to marry beneath him, has at once a powerful ally. It is one thing to adore a girl who is all your fancy paints her ; but if catarrh paints her red or blue, that is quite another matter. The man of refinement in Ward's once famous novel, breaks off his engagement with the most lovely of her sex because she informs him one day, with innocent *naïveté*, that she has taken medicine. There is only one step from rapture to fastidiousness.

Do not imagine, ladies, that I wish to bring Love into discredit. "Love is and was my lord and king," but my loyalty towards it is tempered by reason ; I do not say by years, for it is the Middle-aged (male) who, in my opinion, are most liable to peril from it. This is an heretical view, I know ; for First Love is considered to be the most rapturous and enthralling of all the stages of this singular epidemic ; the virgin honey of all the sweet

products of that hive. But let us investigate this matter a little. A young gentleman who tastes good gooseberry wine for the first time, may well imagine that there is no better effervescing thing; such as Clicquot. He may have an admirable palate, but he has no experience of what is really excellent; he is very thirsty, and the cool and sparkling draught seems to leave nothing to be desired. Mind, I do not even venture to affirm he does not enjoy that gooseberry at the time, better than, with a cultivated taste, he will subsequently enjoy Clicquot: but that does not alter the comparative merits of the vintages. And suppose we accede to his desire, and give him gooseberry for his life; suppose we let him compound for it, as it were, on the understanding that he is never to touch Champagne hereafter; would not that be a dangerous kindness to do the young fellow; a present gratification, at a very considerable future sacrifice? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, I believe it would. For what is this First Love "when it comes to be fried," as the practical though vulgar Yankees have it? what *can* it be but a mere passionate fancy? In the rare cases where

young folks have been brought up with one another—loved one another, at first, like brother and sister—and who, afterwards, long to be more closely united, the affair is different; there is something of experience, of knowledge of each other's failings, as well of each other's virtues; there are grounds, however limited, for mutual confidence—but in the case of First Love, at first sight, there are no extenuating circumstances to mitigate the rashness. To marry, under such circumstances, is like seeing some beautiful flower in a foreign garden, which you at once eagerly demand, purchase at a high price, and transplant to your own plot at home, without consideration of soil or climate. You have not the slightest idea whether, under the new conditions, it will wither or flourish. It was such a very pretty flower that you never considered that matter at all. When the tulip that you gave so many guineas for, fades, or worse, it will be idle to say, "If I buy tulips again, at such a price, then I'm a Dutchman."

Fashion, who has forbidden our young gentlemen to wed except under pecuniary circumstances which are impossible to nine-tenths of them—

Fashion, who sneers at marriage upon three hundred a year—has endeavoured, in her usual feeble way, to compensate for her want of sense and virtue by false sentiment: she affects to regard this first love at first sight, as an ethereal and transcendent emotion, an angelic impulse, the indulgence of which is unhappily not practicable in this world, but which is most interesting, touching, and creditable to human nature. The old painted harridan lifts up her wrinkled fingers glittering with gewgaws, and thanks her pasteboard heaven that she has no pleasure equal to that of watching young people's first *tendresse* for one another. But there is nobody better aware than her false old self, that if a substitution of Chloe for Clarinda, or *vice versa*, should be effected, Corydon would transfer his affections to the substitute with the least possible loss of time. Remove the beloved object, and absence itself will often effect a cure of the amorous shepherd—so solely physical is his malady; but introduce a rival equally beautiful, and Corydon will swear to be *hers*, by hook or by crook, with equal ardour. One pretty face erases another from a young man's

vision, exactly as in what are called Dissolving Views; his retina preserves a feature or two of the disappearing countenance, whose sweetness it had seemed to him he should never forget; but sooner or later, all is gone, and he only sees what is before him. When a man says: "Ah, I have never forgotten my first love," he really means: "I have never forgotten the sensation of exquisite pleasure with which it thrilled me;" or if he does actually remember the identical girl, it is as a man who, having resided in Lincolnshire all his boyhood, may remember his first glimpse of Derwentwater, from Castlehead. A glorious vision; a spot where it seemed to him at the time he would like to dwell for life, but in reality (for he has often seen it since) the dampest of neighbourhoods, and quite unadapted for one like himself who is subject to the lumbago.

The fact is, one's first love may suit one for a wife, or she may not, just as may be remarked of one's hundred-and-first. For my part, if a young man has means, I think he should marry her; and when I say means, I do not intend to imply that he or she should have a large fortune, but that they should have such an income between them as can

reasonably support them. It is impossible to define what this should be. To some gentle persons, five thousand pounds a year is a bare subsistence; to others, three hundred pounds a year is luxury. A young gentleman may subsist on his father's allowance without scruple in one case, when it would be shameful to do so in another. If the lover is of an independent spirit, and is quite sure of the young lady's fortitude and good sense, he may marry on one-half of that which alone would justify another who respects the claims of "Society," or whose Beloved Object is a simpleton. It is not fair to say "They will have children, and *then* how will they get on?" Surely it is equally probable that the husband will improve his position, and become a provider for the household in some way or other. This, indeed, is a conclusive answer to Fashion's veto against three-hundred-pounds-a-year matrimony. If a man and his wife have that income to start with, but have no expectations of improving it, they must be in a stratum of society beneath that of the professions (for who in a profession does not hope to rise?), and therefore beneath that with which Fashion has any concern.

But, in any case, is this young lover, with all his courage and aspirations, to be looked upon as a paralytic, who will be a burden to his wife and children instead of their bread-winner? Truly if so, I think it much better that he should *not* marry lest he beget more drones of the same sort. I am not, you see, on the side of cruel Fashion in this respect; but on the other hand, I refuse to believe in the ethereal character of this first love, which is quite as likely to be evoked by the young gentleman's sisters' nursery governess, or his father's gardener's daughter, or his mother's waiting-maid (all within the prohibited degrees of matrimony, I conclude), as by any more eligible damsel. No; first love is a violent paroxysm, no doubt, but it is not the most perilous form of the constitutional disorder of which we write; of course, some adolescent persons *do* die of measles; but there are worse diseases.

Perhaps the true reason, after all, why this first love is so highly considered by persons not given to any sort of enthusiasm, is that it is common to our race. Even the most calculating and selfish of men, at the first dawn of adolescence, experience

some emotion of the sort, and since it is the nearest approach to poetic feeling which they ever entertain, they are prone to magnify its importance. And it is owing, most likely, to this circumstance that the idea of love which the poets have conceived is the sense in which it is understood by the vulgar. The poets are always young ; their hearts are fresh ; their imagination clothes the object of their ardour in the most becoming hues ; they are passionate and impulsive ; so that in a sort of way all love is to them as first love. They have a capability for the passion, such as the prosaic never possess ; and (between ourselves) they are almost always dowered with the faculty of falling in love with *two or three beloved objects at a time*. Now, an ordinary man does not do this with more than two ; but with two very often, and in this manner.

Polly (suppose) is his darling ; Polly is a blonde, with eyes like the violet, and hair (worn in native curl-clusters) which looks like light brown flecked with gold (I say "looks like," for nobody knows now-a-days what is the true colour of a young lady's hair, or even whether she has any of her


own or not); her gaze thrills him; her whisper throbs his pulses with the fulness of the spring; their spirits rush together at the touching of their lips. Above all, she is devotedly fond of him. Fate, however, parts them for a space. Her cousin Kitty is thrown very much into his company. Kitty is a brunette, with eyes like the sloe; her hair, which is her own (quite by accident it once came undone in his presence), reaches to her heels, and looks like the raven's wing; above all, she is devotedly fond of him. At first, he struggles to be loyal; he writes as usual, although not in so impassioned a style as before, to Polly; but opportunity and Kitty are too much for him; he feels that *she* is tugging at his heartstrings also. Presently, there comes a day when his waning affection for the one, and his growing affection for the other, are at *exactly the same level*. He is in love with two women at the same time. This may last for a little while; about the same time as an eclipse takes; then gradually poor Polly withdraws from between him and her rival altogether, and she reigns alone in his firmament. *Her* whisper throbs, &c.; *their* spirits rush together, &c.

My good lady, you may shake your head, but this happens every day, if not to the best of men, yet to those who are certainly not the worst. The fact is, however it may be with *you* (and I grant that it is quite different with your admirable sex), the thing that is called love, in its usual sense—the monopoliser, the enchanter, the mainspring of actions—is among us men almost utterly unknown. (Pray, don't be angry with me, or at least have patience to read on, for I have yet something to say presently which will please you very much.) I contend that the well-known line,

She never loved me truly; love is love for evermore,

is only applicable to females. A man, my dear madam, may love Polly and Kitty (and does), and half-a-dozen more, and yet have sufficient residuum of heart left to love you, his wife, most truly, and more dearly than the whole lot of them put together. It is his wife to whom (as you well know) he plays the true lover after all. If he had married Polly, he would have been as faithful and true to *her*; I do not venture to affirm that he would have been so devoted to her as to you, but

even that is really possible. They were not married, and therefore nothing can be said for certain ; and unfortunately this is always the case. There is no possibility of having a trial-race for our Matrimonial Stakes, notwithstanding the tremendous interests involved. But let it never be imagined that the love of a mere lover (male), even for the most attractive of objects, is to be compared for a moment with the affection that is inspired in a man by a good wife. The one (I repeat) is a mere passionate fancy, depending on circumstances whether it shall be evanescent or not ; the other is a master passion. A man who is not married, no matter how amorous he may be, has never known true love, which comprehends esteem, confidence, common interest, passion—all that can link one human being's existence with another's. If I still seem disloyal to love in your eyes, fair damsel, your mother, I think, has forgiven me, for those last words. I know that all this is different with you, my dear ; *you* see some striking face for the first time, and say to yourself : " I will marry that man, and no other ;" and if you can you do so, and if you cannot, still you never forget him ; he



holds a sacred place in your heart (of which he is probably altogether undeserving) to your life's end. But the woof of which a man is made is of much coarser texture. You like to imagine him to be even as yourself; you picture him the prey of despair when his beloved is absent; and when he proves unfaithful, you lay all the blame upon some designing Kitty. My dear creature, you are very injurious in so speaking of your own sisterhood. It is my belief that there is no such thing in the world as a designing woman—that is, a woman who takes advantage of the unsophisticated innocence of man. You might as well talk to me (who am a man myself, and somewhat conversant with my fellow creatures) of a designing sheep as contrasted with a world of unsophisticated wolves. Man, being a sneak in most matters relating to women, has encouraged you to believe this sort of rubbish; and in order to excuse his own selfish, reckless indulgence, has even adopted your views. Hence it is that, to hear our young gentlemen of the town discourse in their club smoking-rooms of the artfulness and duplicity of women, likewise of the embarrassments that arise to them through the

lovely creatures throwing themselves so suicidally at their (the coxcombs') head, is so humorously grateful. But this talk of theirs is simple lying.

The fact is, the love which such young gentlemen profess is of a very different kind to what you imagine; they have not the materials within them to produce such an article. Nay, as I said at the beginning, few men have. What Bacon harshly said of men—that they marry in youth for a mistress, and in age for a nurse—may not be true; but it has much more truth in it than all the vague nonsense that is talked about love, as regards men, and especially about first love. The only love that is worth a woman's having is that enduring and complete affection which he bears for his wife; and the true question for young ladies to consider is, not only whether they can win the object of their affections, but if, having won, they can keep possession of his affections: to have and *to hold* are very different things. The meretricious attractions of crinoline and chignon, of paste and powder, will avail them nothing to retain him: nay, the loadstone of beauty itself will soon lose its virtue, if good sense and good temper are not allied

with it. This advice may seem homely even to coarseness, but it is of more importance to your future happiness that you consider it, than all with which your singing-master, dancing-master, and other accomplishment-mongers together can furnish you towards the same end. Sulky pointers, coupled with a chain, and each wishing to go in a different direction, is a flattering image of matrimonial life, as it often presents itself to our view ; and for this, I fear it is women that are to blame. A husband soon gets tired of the pretty artifices which pleased him as a lover ; the thing called love flies out of the window (not when poverty comes in at the door, *that* is a falsehood ; poverty increases true affection) when he finds himself imprisoned (but by no means “transported”) for life with a painted doll, that plays indifferently upon the pianoforte, and has cultivated with more or less success the Parisian accent. Do not be so desirous of instant conquest, my dear young lady ; the fish that is best worth landing, is not caught at the first throw. *He* will examine the bait with care, and if he finds nothing on the hook but tinsel, he will have none of it. The conventional lover is the fellow that

snaps at the gilded lure without investigation. It flatters your vanity that he does so. You think it quite a reasonable thing that he should alter his whole mode of life at once in compliment to you—give up his tobacco and his club—nay, forget all ancient ties of friendship, for the sake of one whom he has known for three weeks or a month. Love of that sort, believe me, is like anger—a *short* madness. It is true that writers have devoted entire books to the praise of this passion; and that over the water there is a whole nation devoted to the same. But I hope you will never read those books; and as for the nation in question, its adoration is confined to love, and by no means extends to marriage.

I have said that those even who boast themselves of being impervious to the tender passion, often fall at last its most complete victims; and deservedly so, for conceiving themselves supernatural. Their condition exhibits love as a glamour, in the direst form. They are generally middle-aged, and sometimes even old. The object of their intense affection is always young. It may be that this love is only First Love, delayed to an unseasonable time; but as compared with the love

of a youth, it is a tornado to a summer breeze, an earthquake to a landslip, a volcano in action to a coal that jumps out of the fire. Such love is often not returned; but whether returned or not, it is out of this sort of material that tragedies are made. I don't think any honest man, who has seen the last act of *Romeo and Juliet* presented on the stage, but will confess that it struck him as most monstrous and unreal; whereas, who that has seen the last act of *Othello*, does not acknowledge its truth and naturalness?

I am conscious that these remarks are by no means exhaustive, though I hope they do not leave the subject exactly where it was. Love is the most difficult of all things to Maximise; but the way to minimise its advantages to both sexes is easy enough: "Marry in haste and repent at leisure." The exaggerated claims put forward by mere passionate fancy, and (singularly enough) allowed as premises by those who will not grant the conclusion, have very much to answer for in this respect. At the same time (as will be shown when I come to speak of marriage), the proverb above is by no means quoted to prove that a man should not marry young.

FRIENDSHIP.

“THERE is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother,” says Holy Writ, and the statement is corroborated by the experience of most men. The ties of blood are liable to be weakened by many circumstances—undue favouritism on the part of parents, which breeds jealousy, or antagonism of interests, for instance—but mainly by the familiarity which begets plain speaking, if not actual rudeness. A brother or sister will sometimes give a piece of their minds to their relative, which the recipient may forgive, but cannot forget, or may be can do neither. “My dear Tom, it is my duty” (which is false) “to tell you the truth about yourself. Your disposition is niggardly: you have been a mean fellow all your life.” Or: “My dear Tom, the fact is you have been a bully and a coward from your cradle.” Or: “My

dear Tom, you have always been the most selfish of human beings, and it is high time you should know it."

The probability is that Tom knows it well enough, and on that very account detests being reminded of it. He may not think himself quite so bad, but he suspects it, and to have the matter confirmed in this uncompromising manner is most galling. It is a great mistake to suppose that a man does not know his own faults and vices much better than even his nearest relative can know them, besides being aware of secret weaknesses that the other never guesses at; but he is accustomed to euphemise—if that can be said of looking at a subject on which one never speaks. His selfishness, when he regards the matter at all (which he hates to do), is in *his* eyes a proper regard for his own interests; his meanness is prudence; his ingratitude is the return for an insult which has wiped out a previous benefit; his bullying is the due assertion of his own importance. Yet his conscience is really sore with the sense of his own shortcoming in these matters, and this blow from his brother's arm falls with terrible effect. For a friend to

strike in this way, would be to destroy friendship altogether; but a true friend never would dream of doing so. He has chosen his comrade in spite of his faults, and has no shadow of right to remind him of them—at all events, in so abrupt or direct a way. Nay, a man's weaknesses—such as extreme susceptibility, lavishness, guileless simplicity, and others—sometimes attract a friend as much as his virtues, and it is no part of friendship to blame and insult, but, by example and gentle treatment, to amend.

Love, in the sense of which I spoke of it in the chapter devoted to that emotion, rushes at once with open arms towards its object, not caring even to investigate its demerits: but Friendship considers before it thus attaches itself, and does so at last *in spite of* all drawbacks. Hence, the former passion is far more likely to cool than the latter, and even to turn to something in the process that is quite the opposite to Love. Love, in a woman's case, does not necessarily cast out fear; but Friendship—however much of reverence, esteem, respect, may form its materials—must know no fear. There must be a perfect equality. If a man has

the somewhat slavish respect for social rank with which Englishmen are credited, he must not choose a friend in a superior grade of society. Nothing of the patron can possibly mix with the true friend. When a naval lieutenant has been appointed to some sole command he has long coveted, he may indeed say: "The First Lord has been a good friend to me;" but his use of the word is solely owing to the sense of obligation, a thing absolutely incompatible with friendship. The interchange of kindnesses between friends begets nothing of the sort; nay, if they are solely on one side (as sometimes, though rarely happens), still one is not in debt to the other. The latter has only enjoyed opportunities which were denied to the former; if their cases were reversed, the enjoyment (they are both convinced) would also be reversed. And that is all. There is a general opinion, that although a man may help his friend by personal exertion, interest, and, in short, by any description of money's worth, he may not help him with money. This may perhaps be the case with vulgar friendships, however genuine; but a friendship of a high class is certainly proof even against the strain of a

debtor-and-creditor account. Leigh Hunt, for instance, had some true and loving friends, notwithstanding that he was in the habit of receiving from them very material benefits. Surely it is a deification of mere dross, indeed, to say that though the fortunes of friends may be unequal, it is dangerous to their mutual relation for the one, out of his superfluity, to supply the other's need with the precious metal. If one can thus lose a friend, one ought to be able by the same token to procure one; yet, neither notes nor gold have yet purchased that commodity which many a rich man would give half his possessions to obtain.

There are, of course, on the other hand, many friendships, so called, entirely begotten and sustained by the bestowal and reception of benefits: to sun one's self in the smiling countenance of a great man is, in the opinion of many respectable persons, "to be honoured with his friendship;" a member of parliament may call another, "if he will permit him to do so," his honourable friend; and I believe there was once a hanging judge, who, when assuming the black cap, always commenced his address to the unhappy victim with: "My

friend, it is my painful duty." But none of these friendships are worthy of our consideration.

Again, the acquaintances which convenience, or opportunity, makes for us, are not to be considered as friends, although, of course, it is possible they may ripen into them. There is a proverb extant, that a man is known by his friends—that is, by the company he keeps; but this, like most saws, is a very untrustworthy guide to character. What a mistake, for example, would that man have made who judged Walter Scott from what he knew of Scott's crony, John Ballantyne. We choose our friends for dissimilarity to ourselves, almost as much as for likeness. The taciturn often selects the gay and buoyant for his companion, and the philosopher the man of practical details. A favourite pursuit, a common amusement even, will cause men to associate with each other, quite as much as any sympathy of opinion. The bond of union between two men is often unintelligible to others; for the mere pleasure we take in each other's society goes further to gain friendship than all the virtues combined, and that pleasure may be unaccountable even to ourselves. Undoubtedly,

respect should grow with friendship ; but the origin of it is rarely due to that cause. Many respectable and well-established firms of friends owe their beginnings, indced, to almost as trivial incidents as does Love itself: a striking or humorous manner of treating some subject of conversation ; an honest avowal of some mental or moral deficiency ; a manful defence of opinion against odds ; nay, a happy turn of expression even, may so tickle the heart-strings, that we exclaim to ourselves: "What a capital fellow this man must be !" and so the first stone of a life-long intimacy may be laid. A wise man will never neglect an opportunity that is thus afforded him, notwithstanding that, as we grow in years, our interest in new people becomes very feeble, and our hopes of meeting anybody worth knowing are faint indeed. There are some folks who are always adding to their hosts of acquaintances, and full of the praises of this or that delightful individual, whom they sat next to at their last dinner-party ; but such persons, although for ever talking of their "dear old friend" so-and-so, just deceased (for they lose about one a week, according to their own account), are really quite incapable of

making friends. They have weaknesses enough, but these are not taking ones; and their virtues are not of the right sort. Nay, I know some really good, honest, generous men, who do not possess a friend in the world, although everybody respects them; while, on the other hand, men of inferior natures attract affection without effort.

Perhaps we may say that there is something almost of genius, as well as geniality, in this capability for friendship. The faculty of personal attachment which some men possess is, at all events, a mysterious gift, whose power is sometimes exercised in spite of the greatest natural obstacles—even Selfishness and Egotism; nothing, perhaps, but kindliness of disposition and the desire to please are absolutely essential to a man so dowered. No human being with a hard heart ever had a friend; for it is the heart into which friendship creeps, and wherein alone it finds a permanent abode. It is, in some respects, even the substitute for Love, since the sincerest and most enduring friendships are commonly (although by no means without exception) found between bachelors. The husband is often careful to please his wife, even to

the neglect of his friend, although, if the wife understands her position and true advantage, she should never suffer such occasions to arise. Yet, it must be confessed, there is something of antagonism between Friendship and Marriage. There is nothing more touching, as well as laughable, than the embarrassment of an "engaged" man, who has to break the fact of his contemplated change of condition to an intimate and trusty friend. It seems, somehow, that he owes him an apology; that he premeditates an injury against him; and that he has broken some unspoken pact between them, in thus attaching himself to the Beloved Object. Hitherto, they have had no secrets from one another, yet now he feels that he would rather reveal this one to any other ear than that which has been always open to him. Indeed, the design of Æneas very often reaches his Achates by another channel—an unnatural reticence, solely owing to the monstrous monopoly claimed by the passion of Love. When a man is married, indeed, his wife, if worthy of the name, will gradually become his best and nearest friend; but it galls Achates, naturally enough, to find his years of

long-tried fidelity weigh as nothing in the balance against the charms of a pretty face, but six weeks seen. The girl, unless she is wise beyond her fellows, takes all as her due right, and has no mercy; but she is the less to be blamed in this, inasmuch as women but very rarely know what friendship is. Their affection for man is Love; their affection for one of their own sex is too liable to be marred by jealousy, and (especially) to be cut short by a sharp word, to be entitled Friendship. Their sympathies are more contracted; religious opinions, politics, and literary tastes do not form bonds of union between them, as with men. Though less selfish and egotistic, they are more vain, and given to rivalry: and upon the whole, although women have plenty of female acquaintances, whom they call "my dear," and even "my dearest," their affection is not greatly prized by one another, nor, perhaps, is it very valuable.

With men, however, next to a good wife, a good friend is the very best thing to be got. Neither time nor place can, of course, be named for the acquisition; but the most likely period for it is without doubt that of early manhood. The

greatest advantage of our universities, to my mind, (and worth all their classics and mathematics, as well as the unpleasantness of acquiring them), is the opportunity they afford of making honourable, true, and worthy friends. One's college friendships very often last for life. Those of boyhood are evanescent. Of course it is pleasant to meet with ancient school-friends ; to find ourselves on common ground which time has hallowed ; but the pleasure lies in the circumstances, not in the personality. The fact is, although the boy has been said to be father to the man, that is not so certain as that the reverse is the case. The character is not sufficiently formed at school for any dependence to be placed on friendships there cemented. Our subsequent positions in life are often vastly different, and we become widely separated from one another ; whereas, at college, although there may be inequalities of fortune, there is good hope that we shall meet again in Life. Indeed, though we owe friendship an apology for naming such a thing in its good company—even the low and snobbish plan of sending a boy to Eton for the sake of aristocratic connexions is found to be futile, for the above reason.

Anything of Toadyism, or base preference of any sort, is incompatible with the noble emotion of which I write. A man that will excuse himself from his friend's table on plea of subsequent invitation to that of a duke, unless for some material reason fully understood by the former, is unworthy to possess a friend. I write this because the greatest enemy to friendship is what Mr. Thackeray has so well entitled "Snobbism," and it is wonderful how weak brethren will succumb to it. That is another reason, by-the-by, why women are so incapable of friendship; dear Lady Mary (whom they have dined with half-a-dozen times perhaps, or less) is promoted, with terrible facility, to that place of friend and confidante resigned (with a disgust she does not hesitate to express) by plain Polly. But that *Man* should slight a jewel with whose worth he is well acquainted, for the sake of mere tinsel, is a reflection humiliating indeed.

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware,
Especially, thou dost not slight the first
In doing unearned honour to the last."

MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE is the crucible of Love. Not only does it test, beyond all doubt, how much of the pure and genuine metal, and how much of dross has gone to make up the composition, but it brings to light various other ingredients, the existence of which, but for this melting process, would never be imagined. The characters both of man and woman remain undeveloped so long as they live single lives ; and the cynic may compare the married state to War, which, if in many respects an evil, is still the Parent of much undreamed-of good. If, for instance, it does not destroy Selfishness, the besetting vice of the male sex, it commonly admits wife and children to sit side by side with self in a man's heart. It is to the Indolent an incentive to exertion, and to the Reckless a motive for prudence. It brings with it the sense of Responsibility, which

is good for all of us, and steadies him who has been hitherto the mere votary of pleasure. If it also makes the Dull somewhat duller, it restricts his oppressiveness within narrower limits, and is so far a clear gain to the community ; while his wife, on the other hand, is no great sufferer, for the patient endurance of dulness in a husband is one of the most admirable of the peculiar gifts of woman-kind. No other relation in life (not even a poor one) will listen to a pointless story, ten times told, save the spouse of the Teller : it is the special "grace of married brows" to remain unruffled during such inflictions ; and if it be urged that there are many women who do not know good talk from bad, and are ready to call every man delightful who can chatter, their universal patience surely more than atones for their occasional misapprehension.

A very dull man should not indeed marry a very clever woman ; nothing is more sad than to see a wife pained by the stupidity of her mate ; but it is only in public that she suffers, and because of the lookers-on : for her part, she would rather hear the mouse squeak (in her own house), than the most

gifted of skylarks carol abroad. All dull men should therefore marry as soon as possible, if it were but to secure an audience. And not only dull men. What evil experiences (and cynical and base opinions derived from them) do those escape who marry young! How often does the dissolute or world-worn man put off till it is too late that yearning after a home, and rest, and faithful love, which he calls "a determination to settle in life!" I do not speak of elderly widowers, who, when they lose a good wife, seem to lose their right hand, and are no more to be blamed for marrying again than an armless soldier for getting the best substitute procurable in place of the missing limb; but with respect to bachelors who marry late in life, they run a great risk. They have as inferior a chance of wedded happiness, in comparison with a more juvenile Benedict, as they have of life itself. The widower does but reinstate himself by marriage in the mode of life to which he has been accustomed; but the elderly bachelor is often thrown out of gear by his novel position altogether, and cannot adapt himself to its conditions; his habits are too settled (or unsettled) to endure the change. In both

cases, one of the greatest bonds which unite man and wife is necessarily wanting—the sympathy that is begotten by long years of common weal and woe, of climbing and downfall, of gain and loss—a sentiment that even the most Unimaginative never fail to feel. Love only concerns itself with the present ; its devotees picture themselves always young, strong, and prosperous ; but Marriage is for youth and age, for health and sickness, and—with the exception of an occasional and not-to-be-depended-upon intervention of the Divorce Court—for our whole life long.

“ Bear and forbear,” says a wicked wit, is the proverb most applicable to wife and husband ; but the duties of the former are not merely, as the villain in the play would have us believe, “ to suckle fools and chronicle small-beer,” nor is it the latter only (by any means) who has to forgive his mate, and make allowances for her. When two people—*non angeli sed Angli*—are placed together for life under one roof, there must needs at times be disagreements, tiffs, unpleasantries, even quarrels (though I do believe that in most wedded lives these make up together but an insignificant item in

the great sum of mutual accord) ; and it is essential that the man be not so self-satisfied as to always avow himself in the right, or, at all events, so obstinate as never to be the first to extend the hand of reconciliation. Even in this case, however, the woman, if she is wise, will sacrifice her pride (for she is the weaker), and submit with as good a grace as she can ; but it is a victory that no man should desire, and which costs him more than he would like to know : for the love of a wife and the submission of a slave are not combined in any woman. A man, on the other hand, who suffers himself to be ruled by his wife is a contemptible spectacle indeed, though a rare one ; and there is generally some reason for the phenomenon, not so patent as the fact. Mrs. Caudle, I am well persuaded, knew a great deal more about Miss Prettyman than are published in her Curtain Lectures ; and it is your shambling, hen-pecked, submissive Benedict, who of all husbands is the slyest, and most addicted to playing the gay Lothario.

A wife, who can be trusted to do so, should always have her own way in matters of the house ; nothing is more pitiful than to see a man usurping

a woman's proper place, and prying into preserve-cupboards, or giving his orders about the drawing-room chintzes. A husband should be a mere bill-paying animal as respects all these things, though, of course, with the power of veto as to immoderate expenditure. If a woman does not understand how to rule her servants, order dinner, and make all things snug at home, she is not fit to be a wife at all. Of course, such knowledge is not learned in a day ; but it is wonderful how quickly female nature will adapt itself to household affairs, so that a young lady of eighteen, who has hitherto thought of nothing (as it would seem) but how to subdue the Military at the county balls, will, after marriage, become in six months a sensible housewife, and have everything nice about her, or (in her own forcible language to the peccant domestic) "will know the reason why." Above all things, if she wishes to make home attractive to her husband, let her keep a sharp eye on the cook : nothing makes a male creature more discontented with his own house than bad dinners, ill served ; if there is anything that will make him swear (and there generally *is*, my dear young lady, although his temper

seemed so angelic when he was a-wooing), it is a cold plate with hot meat, or a hot one with his cheese. Neglect of this sort is unpardonable. Again, it may not be possible to give him dainties, but it is easy to avoid monotony by a careful study of the cookery-book, and it is quite astonishing how the monster man can be subjugated and assuaged by a judicious variation of his meals. The creature might be allegorically pictured lightly led by a fair lady, with a wedding-ring through his palate.

Indeed, there are a thousand ways to lead him, if women would show a little of that tact for which they are so falsely credited. Opposition, contradiction, make him furious; he stamps, he roars, and becomes altogether dangerous. Whereas, treat him tenderly, O wife, and you shall wind him round your marriage-finger. I have seen wives miss their chance of gaining what they had set their hearts on, a thousand times, though sheer stupidity; they *know* that a certain line of conduct is sure to anger him, and yet they wilfully pursue it, when smooth and easy victory awaits them in another direction. Tact! Such women, I say, have not even instinct.

Birds of Paradise, for instance (not to be rude), would act in a more sagacious manner. And again, my good ladies, while I am upon these unpleasant subjects, Don't *nag*. I know the expression is vulgar, and not in the dictionaries; but the thing itself, alas, is common enough in the best of circles. If you dislike the term, the word "worrit"—not the same as "to worry," but something much worse—is a synonym for the objectionable practice to which I allude. The effect upon the husband is the same as that produced by hot plates with cold meats. Say your say, "have it out," and have done with it, in the devil's name, but don't Nag. I sometimes think that when Wretches are brought up at the police-courts for dancing on their wives with iron-tipped boots, and other like diversions (for which I, for my part, would take the whole moral responsibility of having them hung)—I say, a touch of pity comes across me for even these evil scoundrels, when I reflect, "Perhaps, after all, they were Nagged into it." It is not certain that Eve did not *nag* Adam; and perhaps it was Tubal Cain (the ironmaster) who first danced upon his astonished lady in hobnails. The custom is, at all

events, of the greatest antiquity. To what but it, can that harmonious line in Holy Writ refer : "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." What should make them *bitter* against the being whom they should love best in the world (and do love), but Nagging? It is to this, doubtless, that Shakspeare alludes in those sad lines of his :

"War is no strife
To* the dark home and the detested wife.

Also, don't bore the good-man of the house who has serious cares of his own (and those chiefly concerning you and the dear children), with trumpery little domestic vexations : if the cat has visited the drawing-room to its disadvantage, don't let her out of the bag ; if the servants' beer cask has been emptied with unusual celerity this month, don't complain to *him*. He comes home after his labours for rest and comfort, and not to be scraped to death by oyster-shells of that sort. Just as it is the duty and pleasure of married folks to confide to one another

* Compared with.

their real griefs, extracting sweet solace from sympathy, so it should be the aim of each to keep out of the other's sight mere petty annoyances : there are things to reveal, and things to refrain from revealing. And do not you, O man, come home sulky and savage from the City, because of that bad investment in the Chinese Funds, and visit upon your wife and wondering infants the ill-humour that should be reserved for the Celestial Empire. It's a cowardly and brutal thing to do, let me tell you, although as common as blackberries in the hedges with that chivalric thing we call a Gentleman.

Also, don't stint your wife in pocket-money. If she is so unmindful of her duty to you and yours as to be lavish and extravagant, when you find it hard, work as hard as you can, to make both ends meet, I have no defence to offer for her : be angry, and (yet) sin not. But if, while scorning to look twice at a shilling before you part with it, you grudge *her* every sixpence she spends (as is only too often the case), you must forgive me for saying that you are a mean fellow. Wives are often accused of parsimony, when the charge ought properly to be laid against the husband. Narrow

means demand close shaving ; and the pin-money of many wives is calculated upon a totally different scale from what the husband calls his "necessary expenses." Man (as I have had occasion to observe before) never displays so much of the Sneak as in his relations with woman ; and this charge of parsimony is one of the examples of it. It is not indeed untrue, but the offence is often involuntary. To do married men justice, however, it is not they who commonly urge this accusation, but rather bachelors, who easily perceive that women are penurious, without guessing at the cause.

Generally speaking, indeed, in the very free discussions that take place among "those horrid men when they get together" concerning the other sex, married men are its defenders, and bachelors (yes, my dear young lady, those very polite and deferential persons who turn your head by their flatteries) are its detractors. It is they who have had experience of matrimony who speak the best of it, and they have reason.

As the real comforts of religion, the divines assure us, are never known until we fall into adversity, so it is with our wives. Love, the passion, is

a sunshade, admirably adapted for fair weather ; married love is an umbrella—nay, a dreadnought, wrapped in which we may defy the worst of storms.

When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou,

is nothing beyond the truth as regards our wives : they can even evince generosity when the evil is of our own choosing : a good wife will not reproach you for a “ next morning’s headache ” (though it must be only once and away, mind), but will add the lump of ice to the glass of Seltzer-water, and sigh : “ Poor fellow ! I *know* it was not the wine ; but you should not excite yourself so in these metaphysical discussions. What does it signify whether Hamlet was really mad or not ? ” You are not quite certain of what she is talking about : she is probably referring to some *impromptu* explanation of yours to account for your unusual demeanour on the previous evening : but you accept her remark with grateful eagerness.

This praise of the poet only refers to our creature-comforts—a woman’s help in sickness : how she smooths the pillow, and soothes the pain. But, in

all adversity, a good wife is the prop and stay of her husband. Just as folks get half-drowned in the Serpentine for the sake of the brandy in the Royal Humane Society's Receiving-house, so it is almost worth a man's while to lose half his income that he may appreciate the loving sympathy that dwells in his helpmate's heart. "What does it matter, dear," says she, "so long as we can still be together!" Of course, it matters; but, believe me, O cynical celibate, it matters not nearly so much as it would matter to *you*.

Of course, there are many points in which matrimony is open to ridicule, and many married folks who seem to do their very best to render it ridiculous in the eyes of others; but, in my opinion, there are very few men indeed who would not be the happier for being married. The Virtuous, though they rarely need such advice, for most of them become Benedicts early, in marriage reap the reward of their virtue; the Vicious are so far bettered by it, inasmuch as it affords them at least one roof under which they get no harm, but good; it is like the open church-door to the sinner, whither he can at any time repair when the good

impulse moves him. There are some men who live two lives, the one abroad, ill spent ; the other at home—so powerful is the influence for good in the mere atmosphere of domestic life—almost well spent. At the same time, I need not say that I recommend no woman to undertake this task of semi-reclamation, of which they are nevertheless too frequently ambitious.

As to the mere proposition of age in married life, I know no wiser guide than the great student of Human Nature, who wrote :

“ Let still the woman take
An elder than herself ; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and infirm,
More longing, wavering—sooner lost and won
Than woman's are.”


CONVERSATION.

IT may seem strange to some that Conversation should be considered of sufficient importance to hold a place in these "Maxims"—to have an essay all to itself. But the fact is, that by its means the Science of Life, or at least, of civilized life, is mainly carried on. Of the Evidence of the Desire to Please it is the main, if not the sole exponent. A benefit conferred without words is, at the best, an ungracious gift. A favour may be enhanced tenfold by the terms in which it is conveyed, and may, on the other hand be so clumsily conferred as to constitute an insult. The value of Deportment, so insisted upon by the Messrs. Turveydrop and Company, and which is indeed the sole bulwark of the Inane and Incapable, is, after all, but the outwork of man's defence against his fellows; and that once carried, the beleaguered person, unless he

has some gift of tongue fence, is at once in the power of his adversary. It is the knowledge of this fact which make that class which is popularly, or unpopularly, known as "the swells"—that is, individuals removed by Fortune from the necessity of working, and thereby from the intellectual advantages which work entails—so reserved, so dignified, so (to speak Teutonically) like-as-if-they-had-swallowed-a-poker. They do not wish to be questioned. By rigid politeness, by hauteur, or by a pretence of *insouciance*, they avoid Conversation for the same reason as a man, whose social conduct is what is termed "shady," shrinks from the witness-box, and avoids cross-examination. They can't stand it, and they know it. Similarly, in lower grades of society, we find male folks called upon after dinner for a song (except for the "Silence, gentlemen," which is wanting, you might fancy yourself in a tavern), or for a speech—a thing prepared beforehand, and no more like genuine talk, than potted char resembles the scarlet dainty of our English lakes. Such people do not understand the use of that little weapon, the Tongue; so serviceable for Offence, for Defence, for Con-

ciliation. Let me consider this last use of it first, though not, alas ! with any expectation that the reader will escape the necessity of testing its merits in the two other respects.

However much Mr. Carlyle and others (who, by the by, are themselves rather voluminous in their literary works, and what are those but Speech set down in writing ?) may depreciate talk, it is certain that it is the possession of this faculty which places that gulf between us and the brute creation, which Mr. Darwin finds it most difficult to bridge over. It is talk which initiates all our ends ; to Love, to Friendship, it is almost always the tongue which is the Gateway. The preservation of a young woman from the pursuit of a mad bull, or the rescue of a fellow-creature from drowning, are opportunities that do not take place in real life so often as in novels. The manly, yet conciliatory, expression of an opinion, the eloquent eulogy of a pursuit, or the witty defence of a pastime ; in short, a few well-chosen words, well spoken, upon any subject, form the best introduction to our fellow-creatures, and do more to attract them to us than any natural advantage, except, indeed, the



personal beauty of a woman. It is the knowledge of the power of this latter charm which makes pretty women commonly such foolish Talkers. They have only to show their faces to win at once, not only the attention of the wise and witty, but (supposing at least the same are of the masculine gender) their countenance and favour. Why, then, they argue, should we cultivate the powers of speech, when our eyes and lips are more eloquent than others' tongues? A question, however difficult it may be to answer *now* convincingly, to which they will one day receive a terribly conclusive reply.

The good looks of a man, as squinting Wilkes said, only avail him with a woman, against one better skilled in the art of conversation, for the first quarter of an hour; and with one of his own sex, it may be added, for a considerably less space of time. It was not by his pretty spots and gorgeous scales that the serpent persuaded Eve, but by the flicker of his forked tongue. It is much easier to captivate women, however, than to produce a favourable impression on men. The former have almost always some enthusiasm to be sympathised

with, some accomplishment to be flattered, and they are eager to exhibit their likes and dislikes; the latter are often undemonstrative, and even suspicious. It is as difficult to please them as to tickle trout.

The greatest colloquial charm that either sex can possess is naturalness; but it is as rare as originality itself. Nay, I think it is more common for a man to think for himself than to express his thoughts with openness and simplicity. The creature who talks paradoxes to astonish his company, or expresses opinions purposely to shock them, is of quite another and much more common class.

The fact which, above all others, is most to be kept in view by him who would "get on in the world" by the help of his tongue, is, that no topic is so pleasing to a listener as one that concerns himself: no affairs are so interesting as a man's own affairs. To weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice, and *to seem to do so from the same cause*, is to win the hearts of the most reluctant. Even the dyspeptic will be unable to resist you, if you talk about the state of his

stomach. I do not say, affect a sympathy if you have it not, but if you have it, let it be seen to the best advantage. This is the foundation of the saying that true politeness is a branch of Christianity itself. Repress as far as possible all egotism. If you are a very great man, who, although not personally remarkable, may have been brought by the accident of position into the society of those who are so—a minister of state, for instance, may be a very dull fellow, but he is necessarily brought into contact with many interesting people—or if you are yourself of acknowledged eminence in any walk of life (save a few exceptional cases, such as Champion of the Prize-ring, or the Patentee of some scientific and lucrative, but infinitesimal Invention), you may be allowed to use the personal pronoun pretty freely; but otherwise, let the thing said stand upon its own ground. Whether the incident narrated has happened to *you* or not, is a matter of no moment whatever: your connection with it, believe me, is not of the slightest consequence one way or the other; all that is told of your personal part in the matter is mere surplussage; and it is not a case where surplusage is no


error. The vulgarity of what are called "the lower classes," who use habitually the dramatic form of dialogue ("Well, says I"), is not greater, except in form, than that of any educated person who thus offends.

Even worse than talking of yourself (who at least are known to your interlocutor), is the making those who are not common acquaintances of yourself and the person addressed the topic of your conversation. He does not want to hear the opinions of your friend Jones (at all events as such), nor to be told how much he has a year, or how little he manages to live upon; nor does any accident that has happened to Jones interest him upon Jones's account, although, indeed, you may so bore him with your Jones that he would be glad to hear he had cut his throat, and that there was an end of him. It is imagined by many of that large class among whose acquaintances Lords are rare, that if this wearisome individual is a person of title (an Earl Jones), *that* will make him and his doings acceptable to all ears; but they do not take into account the amount of envy which they excite in the breast of their less-favoured friend by the

details of their intimacy with so exalted a person ; and besides, incredible as it may seem, there are really some people who do not care about lords. Indeed, if the House of Peers should ever be abolished by the agency of intelligent persons, and not by the mere mob, they will have, not themselves, but their toadies and sycophants to blame for it ; for, thanks to *them*, whether our Hereditary Aristocracy is or is not a social evil, it is undoubtedly a social nuisance, and a huge impediment to conversation.

In narrating a story avoid baldness, but be as concise as possible ; omit all collateral incidents, such as the following : “ It was in 1832 or 1833—yes, it must have been in ’32, because ’33 was the year the old mare died, and I was driving her down Widderburn Bottom, in the buggy. You remember the buggy, Jack ? How the wheel came off at Reading races, you know ; but stay, Reading had no races at that time : it must have been Stockbridge, or perhaps Canterbury. Where *was* it ? Well, I was driving her in the buggy, and a slapping pace we were going, considering the state of the road—you know what Widderburn Bottom

is, James—and that the night was dark. When I say ‘dark,’ there was half a moon, or perhaps a quarter of one. You don’t happen to have an almanac for 1832 in the house, do you, Morris? Else I would tell you exactly. Well, I had not driven three hundred yards, or it might have been four—perhaps it *was* four: you know that second gate upon the left-hand side,” &c. I am a humane man, and do not say that this sort of narrator should be put to death, but I do think that the most authoritative person among his suffering audience—the rural dean, for instance, if it is in the country, and it is there that such stories are mostly permitted—should be empowered to gag or muzzle the offender. The instrument to be of wash-leather, without spikes, and not to exceed six inches broad. It is more than likely that the poor creature has nothing to tell; that there is no point whatever to be arrived at; but even if there was, who would wish it to be attained by such a route? It is only a judge, who is paid five thousand pounds a year expressly to stand it from dull counsel, or from persons who plead their own causes, who ought to be exposed to this sort of




torture, which is not unlike the favourite application of the Holy Office in cases of heresy—drops of water dribbled at long intervals upon the head.

Do not interlard your talk with Greek or Latin quotations. You know you would not dare to repeat English poetry after the same fashion; why, then, do you take that liberty with a dead language? If your audience is a scholarly one, they must have heard it all before; if not, they will not understand you, and you will in that case be guilty of an unpardonable breach of good manners. A still more contemptible exhibition is afforded by those persons who insist upon using French terms (such as *exigeant* for exacting), when English ones express their meaning equally well. When these titbits are delivered with a rich roll of the tongue (to convey the idea of a Parisian accent), and even with shrugs of the shoulders, and palms of the hands thrown outward, to complete the local colouring, the educated Idiot stands confessed.

While on the subject of phrases, I may perhaps suggest that the repetition of a phrase, in however

pompous and dogmatic a tone, does not render it more valuable, but, on the contrary, is apt to weaken whatever force it has originally possessed. Do not Lecture. The Johnsonian period has departed, never to return. Here and there the head of a clique, or of a college, is still permitted to address his disciples, as it were, from an elevation; but it is a dangerous experiment in a mixed company. It is safer even to Preach; since in the later case, your pretensions, however ill-founded, may be respected from the sacred origin from which they affect to spring.

Be modest in your demands upon the attention of your company; and while taking good care that no other person shall monopolise the conversation, do not fall into that error yourself. Let every one say his say unless (with his Widderburn Bottom or otherwise) he has proved himself incapable. And never interrupt a narration merely because you have heard it before yourself, although, if the company generally is under the harrow, any worm may turn. If the memory is sometimes "a tremendous engine of conversation," it is also often arrayed against it; and a muttered groan will circle round a



whole company at the beginning of some old stories.

I need scarcely say that the attempt to spoil the point of a narrative by carking objections as to the possibility of its occurrence; or the wit of a jest by such a remark as "Aye, but it is not spelt so," or, "I fancy that came out in *Punch*," can afford no pleasure, but exhibits both stupidity and envy.

In whatever you have to communicate, do not strive for an audience; address only your neighbour, or the persons immediately about you. If your colloquial attraction is so great as to produce a general silence, do not show that you perceive it, but finish what you have to say in a modest manner. Never talk *for the gallery*—to look away from the persons you are immediately addressing in hopes to catch the eyes and ears of others, is the act of a person the proper sphere of whose eloquence is a tavern. The vanity of the pot-house demagogue can never resist this temptation.

If able to converse on any other subject, please to avoid that of "wine"—the "vintages." In the

first place, it is five hundred to one that you know nothing about it ; and, secondly, there are so many gentlemen, as ignorant as yourself, who insist upon making it their particular topic. Do not poach upon their preserves ; do not add another social nuisance to the many from which conversation suffers. Wine is somehow naturally associated with lovely women, and I would say one word to the Fast and Loose. Permit me to hint, upon this delicate subject, first, that your good-fortune (as you consider it) with the fair sex is a matter less interesting to others than yourself ; and, secondly, that those who appreciate the topic most, have but little confidence in your veracity. There is but one thing easier than lying upon this subject, and that is to make jokes upon Religion. If you have no religious convictions yourself, it is probable that your neighbour has ; you would not venture to ridicule his political opinions in his presence, how much more, then, should you respect what he holds so much more sacred.

In Conversation, in short, we should not only be careful to avoid all causes of offence, but above

all things, be conciliatory. To evidence our desire to please is to accomplish half our object. At the same time, never pass by an intentional rudeness—

Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.

Conciliation is worse than thrown away upon a bully or a cynic, since it emboldens him for fresh assaults. Be quite sure that the attack is intended and unprovoked; then don't spare whatever Greek-fire lies handy to your tongue. With a woman, you must only be severe and grave; but with a man, you may be even little coarse. His hide is probably tough, and too refined sarcasm will fail to pierce it; but to lose your temper is a great error, for it is to acknowledge him to possess some power of annoyance.

Among well-bred persons, however, such unpleasanties rarely happen; and among those who understand the art of Conversation, never. Those who cultivate it to perfection, invariably use tobacco; it calms the passions, matures the

thoughts, prevents men talking when they have nothing to say, and restrains their speech within reasonable limits, since otherwise their cigars would go out for want of puffing.

PLEASURES.

SOME men have no pleasures, and pride themselves on having no capacity for them. They fancy that it is easier to get on in the world without such an encumbrance. They imagine that life is an arena wherein men strive the better for being stripped to the skin. This is only one among many instances of how the Cunning overreach themselves. Just as we sometimes see the Avaricious lose thousands by some act of ill-judged thrift—the men who will not give a safe miss at billiards because it affords the adversary one, and who thereby lose the game—so do these prudent fools miss their opportunities of gain. It is in the pursuit of Pleasure that almost all friendships are first formed, and especially those friendships from which spring solid advantages. It is the Rich and Powerful who have most to do with Pleasure. At the Battue and over

the Whist-table, there are more favours asked and granted, especially in politics, than in the lobby of the House of Commons. This may be wrong, but it is very natural. It is harder to refuse a favour to one with whom you are at the moment on the best of social terms (a partner with whom you have just scored the first game, or your next neighbour in the "drive" who has so courteously given up that doubtful pheasant to your gun), than to reject the claims of a better man than his *protégé* during unsympathetic office hours. Even in this reformed and reforming land, there are loaves and fishes to be given away still, not so much to deserving objects, as to folks who choose the proper time and place to ask for them.

"Rather a business view of Pleasure, methinks, Mr. Man of the World," you say. True, good reader: it is not my view, however; but only one which I recommend to those too sagacious gentry who deem pleasure a waste of time. Even in a lower grade of life, it is doubtful whether confidences are not better established, bargains made, and the main chance altogether secured, at the chop-house over the glass of toddy, rather than

in the ungenial atmosphere of the counting-house, or on 'Change, where all is thrust and parry.

However, the great majority of us need neither apology for enjoying ourselves nor incentives to it. Although so-called men of pleasure—a misnomer, by the by, for there is no class so difficult to please, or who after the first year or two of their whirl of dissipation enjoy themselves less—although, I say, this class of idlers is a small one, the number of those who aim at enjoyment as the end and object of their labours is very large. A man works hard all day, that he may have wherewithal to make merry in the evening. A comfortable home, a good table, a pretty wife ; or if he thinks of others more than himself, his very unselfishness is a refined yet very substantial sort of pleasure. The variety of passions in human nature is infinite ; so that nobody need wonder at another's tastes. This wondering, when it takes the form of condemnation, is one of the surest signs of a thin intelligence, a narrow mind. How often do we hear the observation : “ How *can* So-and-so go, evening after evening, to this or to that place of entertainment ? ” The

Theatre, the Scientific Lecture-room, the Whist-table, the Young Men's Meetings at Exeter Hall, the Evening Party—no matter where. Yet what inquiry can be more foolish? The object of his astonishment might as reasonably retort: "How *can* that fellow stop at home in his dreary lodgings calculating the recent eclipse, or feeding white mice?" or whatever happens to be *his* little weakness. Each of these individuals imagines that his particular taste is founded upon just grounds, and has a universal importance, while the other's is beneath contempt. I once heard a very respectable person, whose calling was that of a broker, but whose line of business lay chiefly in mines, remonstrating with a near relative who spent a good deal of time (and I may add, money) on the Turf.

Of course, there was a lecture against gambling. "Come, come," rejoined the bookmaker; "if it comes to *that*, you are as great a gambler as I am. You are not only a broker, my friend; I happen to know that you are a speculator. Now, I am a speculator in horseflesh, you in ore."

"True," returned the other; "but the difference is great. My trade at least benefits the community ;

it advances the interests of labour, and supplies (when the mines happen to have anything in them) a useful article to the public. Your horse-racing, on the other hand, does no good to anybody; the money lost in betting goes from one scoundrel's pocket (forgive me, my dear fellow) into another's—that is all."


"I beg your pardon, sir," said the other, reddening. "By encouraging racing, we promote the public benefit by improving the breed of horses."

The speculator in mines closes his left eye, and addresses his relative in the most confidential tone that sarcasm could compass. "And do you mean to tell *me*—and the morality of the matter, so far as you are concerned, depends upon your answer—that you ever offered or accepted a bet *in your life* with the object of promoting——"

"And do you mean to tell *me*," interrupted the other, shutting *his* left eye, "that you ever bought or sold a share in your life——"

At which stage in the altercation both parties happily burst out laughing, and all consequences of quarrel were averted.

Of course, there are moral pursuits, and there are immoral, but never was Dr. Johnson's injunction to "Clear your mind of Cant" more necessary than when we are considering this matter. The man devoted to the pursuit of the almighty dollar in established channels, shudders at the gentleman who lives by his wits; while that fashionable (and sometimes really agreeable) hanger-on of society thanks Heaven that he has never disgraced himself by adopting a trade. And as with the business of life, so with its pleasures; so long as they are not manifestly wicked, we have no right to condemn our brother's tastes. They may seem to us to be frivolous enough; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that "serious people" do not always take up with missionary enterprise and the like from the best of motives. We have not only no right to judge, but we have not even the premises to form a judgment upon this matter. To the man who is devoted to Art—music, painting, and the like indoor amusements and pursuits—can anything be more inexplicable than that desire for Sport which is with very many a passion almost as natural as love itself? He cannot conceive how a



grown man can take pleasure in riding three days a week at full gallop across hedges and ditches after a sort of red dog with a dreadful smell, out of compliment to whom he dresses in scarlet ! He is as unable to imagine why rich men spend thousands a year upon preserving hares and pheasants for their private sport ; or why poor men, actuated by the same madness after game, will run the risk of a prison and mortal combat, in order to gratify it. On the other hand, the fox-hunter deems the man of music a ninny to prefer the scraping of catgut to a view holloa, or the sitting with the ladies at the piano, to pushing through the wet November woods.

As a devotee neither of sport nor of the fine arts, I may be permitted to say that the pursuit of the latter has one great advantage over the former : it is independent of the weather and of the seasons. Sporting-men are melancholy objects for six months in the year. Even in winter, our mighty hunters are for ever tapping the barometer (the only branch of science that has any interest for them), and a hard frost cuts them up (and down) as though they were exotics. It must, moreover, be

added (since I am addressing all degrees of gentry) that the sports of the field are expensive. Of course, a poor man may be "given a mount" now and then, and still oftener asked down to a country-house for a week in the covers; but, to my mind, great essentials of a Pleasure are perfect equality and independence. On the other hand, it is not to be denied that sporting is healthy in itself, and does not now (as it used to do) lead to vulgar dissipation.

A still worse error than to ridicule the tastes of others is to represent them as vicious. The teetotaler is but too apt to denounce the pleasures of the table; the religious fanatic (who is generally an excellent trencherman) sees no harm in eating and drinking, but a great deal in going to the theatre, or in reading novels: whereas lessons of virtue are often inculcated by the drama and fiction, which would never be tolerated, by the persons benefited, from the pulpit. Of course, there are some very common pleasures which are also very vicious. There is Gallantry, for instance (not to be treated of in these Maxims until the French edition is called for), a matter concerning

which the reticence of our respectable classes curiously contrasts with the shameless plain-speaking of that world of fashion to which they pay such homage. The days are over when the Great Duke had to consult my "Lady C." before any great public measure could be brought under the favourable notice of his august sovereign ; but even yet, as I am credibly informed, Gallantry, though exiled from court, still occasionally plays a part in politics such as would astonish the good folks who know no more than is told them by the newspapers.

Then there is Gambling, a pursuit which, compared with the innocent diversion of play, is what gallantry is to flirtation ; it is playing for more than we ought, for higher stakes than we can afford. It is unnecessary to expatiate upon the miseries which this crime (for it is scarcely less than a crime) entails not only upon those who practise it, but upon their helpless wives and families. I speak of play as a pleasure. Dr. Johnson—once more to quote that eminently moral sage—has delivered his opinion that cards are a desirable institution, and that to play for nothing is a great waste of time. We all know Talleyrand's remark—a thorough

Man of the World—to one who excused himself from taking a hand of whist upon the ground of ignorance of the game: “Young man, what an old age are you preparing for yourself!” And certainly cards have an immense advantage over most pleasures, in that the diversion they afford is lasting. They can also be played anywhere, and almost under any circumstances. If you are too ill to rise, Good Samaritans will come to your bedroom and play upon your counterpane. They are independent of weather (for it is a great injustice to their attraction to say that they are suitable for a wet day). They are not exacting as to intelligence; a man of very moderate wits may be a tolerable (though never a first-rate) whist-player, and serve one’s turn as a companion, in that way, as well as the best. As to stakes, that is a matter each must decide for himself. Nothing is more foolish than the sentiments one hears expressed upon this subject, such as, “Nobody should exceed shilling points;” or, “Silver threepennies are quite enough for excitement.” They may be enough for the speaker’s excitement, who is perhaps a country curate with a hundred and fifty pounds a year,

but they will afford no interest to a man with fifteen hundred a year. The same silly folks say : " I don't want to win my neighbour's money, and he doesn't want to win mine." This is, of course, false, for if it were true, they would be mad to sit down and play against each other. The fact is, there is no measure of stake, except the amount which each can lose without inconvenience. For this reason, it is important that persons who play much together should have something like the same amount of income, otherwise the stake of the poorest should be adopted. If folks use Play for the mere profit, it is no more a pleasure, but a profession, and by no means a reputable one ; and when I speak of Cards, I refer only to the English gentleman's game of Whist, whereat losses can be calculated beforehand ; almost all other games are either varieties of gambling, or too trivial to be considered as pleasures. They are mere pastimes.

To all of us who are not billiard-players, perhaps the most childish amusement seems that pushing of ivory balls about a green table with a stick, though it is wonderfully attractive to some men,

and in the skill and judgment required, deserves to be almost ranked as a science. Yet, somehow, if I had to warn a young fellow against any particular Pleasure, not in itself positively vicious, I think it would be billiards. The scene has a tainted atmosphere, and the company seems somehow tainted too. One would as soon think of looking for a friend in a billiard-room (I have done it often, in one sense, but I mean looking to find one for the first time) as of selecting one's bride from the audience of a music-hall (Exeter, of course, excepted). The friend or the lady might *possibly* be all that was desired; but the odds against even the single event are such as no Bookmaker has ever ventured to offer.


As to the Turf (although wishing to exercise the largest charity in these Maxims), I have not a word to say in its favour. It is not a pleasure at all, but a calling, which owes some of its popularity, at least, to the ease with which it is entered. One has to serve no apprenticeship, to offer no sureties, to pass no examination. It welcomes the minor as gladly as his grandfather, and indeed more so. But they are not a light-hearted race,

even the youth of the betting-ring. A glum, mysterious, vainly-calculating set, doomed, sooner or later, to singe their wings in the wretched farthing candle which attracts them. A man of real talent is thrown away on such a pursuit, for no wit can cope with Welshers. Even if your plans are laid with such subtlety as to insure success, how can you calculate upon the noble lord, whose estate you fancy you have won, not having already lost it to somebody else? Or on the betting-house being shut up on the morning after the race, and not even its proprietor left on British soil to be punched on the head? Of course, to "pull off" a large sum by a stroke of luck is a very great satisfaction, and not the less so because it is rare; but, nevertheless, we will not include "the Turf" among our pleasures, if you please.

People who have their thoughts occupied with what they shall eat or drink, and who talk of what they had for dinner yesterday, or are going to have to-day, are commonly dull, not to say swinish folks. But it is good to have a discriminating palate; not, indeed, for different vintages—unless you are a

wine-merchant, when it is useful enough—so as to pass judgment between this wine and that, and intolerably bore the company with your sniffs and “ahs,” but to be able to appreciate what meat and drink your friend sets hospitably before you. Fastidiousness in a young man is disgusting ; but a little charity should be extended to the aged epicure, who has perhaps only the one pleasure of tasting left to him. Of course, the delights of the table stand low even in the list of poor human blisses, but they are among the most lasting ; and when combined with the charm of agreeable conversation, I confess I know few things pleasanter than a good dinner. But the misfortune is that the gourmand has often so much of the hog in his disposition, that he makes his arrangements for feeding only ; so that the best company is not generally met at the best tables.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the chief attraction of Pleasure is its contrast with Work. An idle man who enjoys himself to excess (no matter what his particular fancy) soon ceases to enjoy himself at all ; whereas when pleasure palls upon those who have only partaken of it judi-



ciously, it is one of the most certain signs of departing youth. Mere amusements soon do this with us all; and perhaps the true difference between a pleasure and a pastime lies in their duration. How quickly, for instance, one tires of going to the Play—that diversion which seems to us as children the nearest approach to bliss. Of course, there is such a thing as a regular playgoer, but the genus is very limited, and dying out. Most persons who have reached middle age are averse to rise directly after dinner, and without their post-prandial cigar, to be jolted in a cab to “the Lane,” or “the Garden;” they only visit them to escort country cousins, or to take “the dear children.” Opera-goers, male—who go for pleasure, and not for fashion—are about as rare as male opera-dancers; and, besides, they may be classed among the fine-arts folk already mentioned; while for those who go for the Ballet, see Gallantry.

Besides those persons alluded to at the commencement of this paper, who have no pleasures, and who go about their business exactly like machines, there is another, though smaller class, whose *Pleasure is their Business*. They rub their

hands over a large balance in their favour. Weird and unnatural laughter sounds from the principal's lonely room, whereat the clerks in the outer office exchange meaning glances. Somebody has been overreached by their intelligent employer. When Mr. Merryman is an attorney-at-law things generally go hard with those that he catches in his net. However, we have agreed not to find fault with other people's ideas of enjoyment. "Do not let us make a *toil of a pleasure*," observed the widower, when the bearers of his wife's coffin stepped out too fast for him. Moreover, there are some callings (although I think always rather exceptional ones) which are naturally a delight in themselves. The Poet,

When a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek,

experiences doubtless an intense enjoyment. Even "a lucky rhyme" is a great gratification to him. The true Novelist, again, while the creatures of his brain are growing up, takes such a surpassing interest in them and their fortunes as certainly exceeds most pleasures. But these are scarcely Joys of the Earth, and they affect only a very few. Pleasures


Of the Imagination generally appeal to but a small circle. When the season of intelligent youth is over, first Poetry begins to lose its witchery, then Fiction ceases to charm ; and at middle age, it is astonishing how few persons take a genuine pleasure in books, although so much is said about them. The regular Student is a very rare *genus*, and (between ourselves) not a very satisfactory one. He has scarcely ever an original mind. He knows little of the world he lives in. The noblest study for mankind—that of his fellow-man—he has totally neglected. His conversation has plenty of illustration, but lacks a topic ; he has a tropical luxuriance of metaphor, but no trellis-work to hang it upon. His talk, compared to that of an intelligent Man of the World, is

As moonlight unto sunlight, or as water is to wine.

At the same time, a man who neglects to cultivate some taste for books—which are not betting-books, nor law-books, nor account-books—voluntarily deprives himself of a pastime in weariness, a companion in solitude, and a solace in affliction. Except for the convenience which his Bradshaw

affords him, and the increased protection of the law, he might as well have been born before the printing press.

It has been well said that the simplest pleasures—those that lie about the feet of every one of us—are the best and the most lasting. This is doubtless true; but here again, only a small section of mankind is concerned with the fact. It requires a very delicate and sensitive organisation to appreciate these so-called common pleasures. A taste for nature (for instance) can be cultivated on a large scale, as we have seen in our own country during the present century, but scarcely in individuals. A country-bred boy will get up early to go a-hunting upon his favourite (and always unrivalled) pony; but you wont get him up in a hurry to see the Sunrisc. He will climb the everlasting hills, to roll stones down a steep place, or other exciting diversion; but he will not admire Natural Sublimity, even though you should stand over him with a stick. Scarce one man out of fifty takes any genuine pleasure in scenery, although the Cataract may haunt the fiftieth like a Passion.



It has been my object in the above observations to state what I believe to be the truth : the convictions forced upon me by a long and various acquaintance with mankind, or, at least, with that portion of our fellow-countrymen who possess more or less intelligence, social position, leisure, and means to spend it in the manner most agreeable to themselves. To many, my remarks may have seemed worldly, but I have been speaking of worldly pleasures, not of spiritual ones ; and my Maxims are professedly of the world. Perhaps what I have to say in conclusion, however, may do something to re-establish me in the opinion of the more serious-minded of my readers.

There is one pleasure which I have designedly kept for the last, as children keep their best sweetmeat, because it *is* the best. It is one which lies, more or less, within the reach of every one. It is adapted for all ages and all stations. It is lasting, and even becomes more pleasurable the more we indulge in it. I may also say in defence of some of those whom I have been describing perhaps somewhat unfavourably, that it is practised by the votaries of other pleasures more often than is

generally believed. To Noblemen and Gentlemen, exhausted with other excitements, but who have not as yet tried this recreation, it may be conscientiously recommended as a most agreeable one. It has not the merit of novelty, for the patent was taken out nearly two thousand years ago ; and yet only too many of us are unacquainted by experience with its great merits. A Man of the World who had enjoyed half a century of the pleasures of the town as his own master, exclusive of a long Minority, assured me with great gravity, and an oath—not so much for confirmation's sake as because it was the fashion of his day to use it—that there was no enjoyment like it. “Gad, sir,—none like the pleasure of doing good to others ;” and with a touch of regret in his ancient voice (injured as Falstaff's was with the singing of anthems), and a shaking of his wig, and a trembling of his thirty-guinea set of teeth, he added : “And gad, sir, I wish I had enjoyed myself in that way a little more.”

CHILDREN.

CHILDREN are the civilizers of humanity.

There is scarcely any man that does not love his own child, at all events while it is a child, and does not become importunate in its claims upon him. The greatest ruffian has a smile and a kind word for the small curly pate who calls him "Father." The most vulgar of mankind, immersed in petty cares all day, and greedy of paltriest gains, shows grains of good when dancing his little ones upon his knee at home. Their presence is better than that of any priest to stop the ribald oath, the filthy jest. We do not need Christ's word to tell us that it would be better to have a millstone tied about our neck and be drowned in the sea, than offend against their innocence. No gentleman, no man, worthy of the name, but feels himself restrained from violence of words or actions when they are

listeners or spectators. Their simplicity is far more attractive than the accomplishments of elder folks; their ignorance more delightful than grown men's learning. As there is no joy so joyful and without alloy as theirs, so there is no pathos like the reasonable grief of a child. Think, for instance, of some little one (it is a common case enough) lost in London streets, dazed with the roar and glare of them, afraid to move, afraid to stop, looking in every passing female face for her mother's, and finding only a stranger's; presently the centre of a knot of people, some pitiful, some merely curious, some downright heartless and cruel, and understanding nothing that they would have her do, but only knowing that the night is coming on, and that she has lost her home. Heretofore, bed and supper have been provided, just as the sun and moon, but now the whole Fabric of her Universe is suddenly thrown out of gear. She refuses with tears the oranges, buns, and sweetmeats, which the well-meaning idiots about her are offering in profusion, and putting her little hand into that of the kindest-featured of her questioners, whispers: "Take me to mother."

The best thing he can possibly do is to take her to a police-station ; but an indifferent substitute for mother, truly, yet the most certain medium by which to find her ; while the tenderness of those great gaunt guardians of the law, with their towering helmets stooped low to get her lisping answers to their short and sensible interrogatories, is pleasant to witness. The Inspector looks in her hat, and if he finds there her name and address (where it ought always to be), remarks that her mother is a sensible woman, and orders "a Reserve" to take her home. The whole division have been bettered by the introduction of that trouble some lost darling, and the married ones remark that she was not unlike their own little Polly.

Soldiers, sailors and policemen are exceptionally kind to children. They have themselves to do with rough strong fellows, and perhaps the contrast pleases them ; or, since it is their mission to protect, it may be they are attracted to those who so evidently need protection. On the contrary, the more delicate and effeminate a man is, the less he likes the society of a child : it is too natural and outspoken a companion for him : it is too exacting to


suit his indolent and selfish nature; perhaps it reproaches him with the mirth and simplicity which he has for ever lost. An old man who, being in good health, yet detests to see children about him, is almost always a wicked, worthless fellow.

Of course, I am not speaking of little folks who are spoiled and disagreeable; the sin of their fathers and mothers is naturally enough visited upon them, and we wish them drowned like puppies. The habit of having children down at dessert, in a company not wholly composed of their aunts and uncles, is a mistake. The permitting a boy to remain behind with the gentlemen after the ladies have withdrawn, is a nuisance. Children will often say the most embarrassing things, when there is any attempt on the part of their parents to make them "show off;" and I am glad to hear them. A child that is not perfectly natural is generally disagreeable, and always without the pleasant innocent ways that one loves in children, just as a forced strawberry is inferior to those grown in the sun. We have prigs enough among grown men, without cultivating them in the nur-

sery. A shy child is the proof of foolish parents ; a rude child, of unmannerly ones. Neither father nor mother can have much sense of propriety when they permit their guests to be worried by the tricks, or pestered by the impertinence, of their offspring. They should reflect that others cannot be expected to make the same excuses for them which they do themselves. A peevish child that cries in the drawing-room shows an ill-managed nursery, and if not instantly removed, an ill-governed house.

At the same time, ill-behaviour on the part of the juveniles affords the very best opportunity for a visitor to establish himself on a friendly footing, and especially with their mother. How many a man—very reprehensible in other respects—have we heard defended by a mamma upon this ground : “ Well, he cannot be so very bad, because he is so kind to children.” And the lady is right ; for kindness to little folks must be spontaneous. They are wonderfully quick in detecting the hypocrisies of their elders. They will take Mr. Humbug’s orange, but they will also apprise him, if he is so foolish as to ask their opinion, that he is “ a nasty

ugly man"—with an eye that rolls about, or any other striking defect which may have attracted their notice. He may be a royal duke without their caring twopence about that fact (surely of itself a most rare and admirable attribute); and they don't understand about their having "expectations," and the necessity of being civil to Uncle Grumble Growls. What is by no means so charming, however, in children is that, like their mothers, they are deficient in tact. They are unaware of the inadvisability of speaking their minds. It is dangerous to recommend them to be reticent; there is no middle course to be pursued between the utmost licence and silence. I will mention one example. There was a certain warrior, who was in another respect like unto the late Duke of Wellington—namely, that he had an aquiline nose; at least, he once possessed one, but it was carried off in action by a bullet, or, perhaps (for it was a very large nose), by chain-shot. Of course, this made him remarkable—conspicuous by the absence of that feature. Some time after this catastrophe, he was asked to dine at a brother officer's house, who had an *enfant terrible*—an in-



quiring child. Still, Georgey was obedient enough when properly spoken to; and before dinner, his mother thus addressed him: "Georgey, when you come down to dessert this evening, there will be a Colonel Grosney at table; we wont make any observation about his nose, will we? Do you understand?"

"Yes, ma. I wont say a word about his nose."

This promise, however, did not prevent him staring at the gallant colonel a good deal.

"Why, mamma," said he, after a protracted investigation, "how *could* we talk about it? He has got *no* nose." A most painful revelation of the past, as well as a personal remark involving considerable embarrassment.

Friendships have been broken, Fortunes diverted, and Lifelong Enmities engendered by children's artless sayings. But all sensible folks will endeavour to forget such mischances. Children should surely have more allowance made for them than is demanded for grown people. They are selfish like ourselves, and they do not, like us, possess that conventional sense of propriety which prompts us to conceal our selfishness. They have no accurate

perception of time, or space, or death ; they do not understand the terrors of that " Good-bye " which shakes their mother to the soul, as she kisses their wondering little faces for the last, last time. If she is going away to-day, she will return to-morrow, they think, or the next day, or, at all events, in time for baby's birthday, which is a domestic festival of the highest class. Poor little unconscious ones !

An officer, whose regiment was serving in foreign parts, and whose leave had expired, had taken up his children for the last time, and kissed their pretty cheeks, and driven away half-choked with tears, to the shipping-wharf, from whence he was to sail to the under-world. On his way, he bought a doll's house, and sent it back to his orphaned dear ones, that they might remember his last act was one of loving-kindness. They had been sorry, of course, to part with him ; but they knew nothing of the intervening years that were to be between them—the perilous seas, the shocks of time and chance. Now, it so happened that the ship in which he was to sail had met with some mishap in dock, and he was told that this would cause eight

hours' delay. This seemed a sort of reprieve to the poor man. He hurried back to kiss once more these little creatures that monopolised his brain and heart. He found them at high jinks, and in the wildest spirits over the doll's house. Papa and his sentiment were felt to be an intrusion in so supreme a moment ; and the poor man went away, when his time came, with a heart half-broken by this unsatisfactory behaviour.

Folks who imagine children are wingless angels are in error. Yet there is something divine about them too, though perhaps it takes a parent to discover it. Even a man so alive to the feelings of his fellow creatures as Jeremy Taylor, speaks of the loss of a child as something of comparatively small consequence ; he makes light of scars who never felt a wound. And so far as infants are concerned, it is true that fathers, for the most part, do not deeply feel their deaths, whatever be the agony of the mother. " Was there any property to be inherited that made the loss so particularly distressing ?" asked one, in my hearing, in reference to the grief of a poor gentleman on the loss of his only son, aged but a few weeks old. And though

the question was stupid and out of place enough (to say the least of it), the speaker was the type of a very common, and by no means plebeian or unfeeling class. But a child whose young affections have had time to entwine themselves in ours, is a treasure that is not to be parted with without uprooting the heartstrings. To miss the companionship of an intelligent little creature who calls one Father, is to feel a painful void.

To say, " She has departed,
Her voice, her face is gone "—

her sweet and gentle voice, her trustful winning face :

To feel impatient-hearted,
Yet know we must bear on !

How inadequate is all the eloquence of the pulpit to express the case ; it is the poet only who seems to hit it.

To expect that all parents should take an interest in " the growth of a child's mind," is to suppose them not only philosophers, but practical ones ; yet he misses much who has not given attention to the intellectual development of his offspring. To

put this attraction upon the lowest ground, children are immense fun: to a humorist, who pretends to be deeply engaged on some "grown-up" matter, while a flock of juveniles are going about their own affairs around him, they afford an admirable microcosm—an epitome of the great world. And besides, they have a world of their own, very curious and worthy of attention also. There is the infant, who has hitherto seen nothing of the egotism of society, but imagines that it exists for her alone. The world and she have as yet no quarrel, and if you commit no outrage—such as forbidding her anything—she will go on in a manner after the late Mr. Robert Owen's own heart. She has no sense of the rights of property. All is hers she can clutch in her chubby grasp. Everybody must share in her good spirits. She hears an organ in the street, and after putting up one wee finger—the prettiest statue of Attentive Listener that one can imagine—as if to certify herself that it is dance-music, she takes her petticoats in both her hands with grotesque grace, and revolves slowly, like a prize turkey on a spit. Suddenly it strikes her that there must be a ball. Everybody must

dance. She runs to her sisters and brothers, and vehemently pulls at them, like a St. Bernard dog who has a matter of the utmost importance to communicate to his friends the monks. Must they *all* dance? "Yes; all," nods she, quite purple with excitement. "Just so." And no sooner have their occupations been given up for eccentric gyration, than she toddles off to the rug, sits down, and betakes herself to her picture-book. Remonstrated with upon the fickleness of her conduct, she throws up both her arms and cries: "All gone" (one-third of her entire vocabulary), to signify that the passion for dancing exists no longer. She is now devoted to Art. By the most impatient gestures, she demands a ring of spectators to look at "mum-mum-ma" (the portrait of a comic nursery-maid, and not in the least like her mother). "Do you all see it?" she seems to say. "Do you all acknowledge the likeness?" Well, there is another surprise for them yet. "Pup-pup-pup-pa!" (this is the comic policeman with a carrot nose). Triumphant with her discovery, penetrated as it seems with the value of this highly coloured illustration, which combines the exact images of both her beloved

parents, she suddenly bursts into a fit of laughter, and tears it right down the middle. Charming irresponsible Despot, incarnation of unreasoning Caprice, mirthful Mischief, how can we punish her, except by the administration of a shower of kisses?

The first sign of a child's having quitted the stage of infancy, is her love for dolls. I am now speaking of female children. The distressing case of the young gentleman who fell in love with Dolladine, his sister's doll, and never recovered from that hopeless passion, is rare. But little girls have a most curious delight in these wax and saw-dust creatures. It is no matter whether the doll is good looking or not; they devote themselves to it, as a mother devotes herself to her baby, whether it is white or black: they would like to have it at meals; they insist upon it being placed on their pillows at night. When they go a journey, they hug it in their arms, and would like something bought for it at the refreshment stations.

I have been introduced to a great number of dolls in my time, but the one that has impressed me most favourably, as an outsider, was and is (for

she is still in existence, although a torso) Topsy. Topsy was never good-looking, nor (I am sorry to add) even genteel. Between ourselves, and judging from her complexion, I doubt whether she is *pur sang*—strictly European. In very early life, she met with a misfortune that would have detracted from the most beautiful; being incautiously left alone on a footstool by her mother (for to nothing less than maternity does her little possessor lay claim), the baby got hold of her, picked her left eye out in the profoundest silence, and then with shrieks of triumph, threw it in the fire. With true feminine interest, her parent only seemed to cling the closer to her disfigured offspring; while the baby (her aunt) when she came in time to understand of what a criminal proceeding she had been guilty, not only expressed her sorrow, but made every reparation in her power. She bought her another eye, but, as was pathetically observed, “it was not like the one she lost;” and indeed it was quite a different colour, and had a habit of turning right round in the socket, and presenting to the astonished spectator its canvas back.

To attire Topsy with splendour was only to

make her deficiencies more palpable. She was not intended for high-life at all. I do not say when unadorned, she was adorned the most, because, having upon one occasion intruded upon her privacy while she was being "batht"—upon my word, I hardly know how to express myself with sufficient delicacy, but the fact is the absence of clothes did not improve her. A simple cotton dress, with a kerchief of sober hue tied round her neck, so as to conceal where the head and body joined, became her best. If she had no bonnet, it was necessary, before presenting her to company, to give the back of her head a sharp rap against the floor or table, to prevent her hair falling off, which was secured to her head by what I believe is called tin tack; and it was ten to one that the shock of this operation turned her loose eye round. However, when all was made right, her mother would take her in both arms, just as Punch holds his baton, and bring her down to the drawing-room with the utmost pride. She was firmly persuaded that if Topsy was not absolutely beautiful, she was a perfect lady. Under this idea, a hat and feathers was upon one occasion procured for her, but the

incongruity was so glaring—Topsy had always hitherto looked most respectable, but I am afraid to say what she looked like in this finery; very drunk, for one thing—the impropriety, I say, was so obvious, that this head-dress was at once transferred to her first cousin, a doll without any originality or strength of character, but formed to move in a much higher circle, to recline in the ring of the dolls' Hyde Park.

“Dear papa, poor Topsy has had another misfortune—she is so unlucky, you know.—Now, don't talk nonsense about fetching the doctor; and you can't see her because she is obliged to keep her bed. But I want you to take this to a shop, and get it repaired. It's her leg, poor dear. Alice and I both wanted to nurse her at the same time, and it came off in my hand.” It was a case of compound comminuted fracture of the knee-pan, and beyond the aid of the faculty. But I bought her a new leg, and afterwards another, and then an arm. As we Humans are said to renew ourselves entirely, and become new creatures once in every seven years or so, so Topsy has now scarcely a limb left which she started with from the manufacturer's

shop. Yet her mother's affection for her remains unchanged.

The next channel of a child's love (though dolls will often hold their ground till their mammas are twelve years old and more) is the brute creation. They are interested in it to an extent unparalleled among grown people, with the exception (perhaps) of the paid officials connected with the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A cruel girl is (I am thankful to say) quite out of my experience. But they sometimes destroy their little favourites by over-kindness. I knew a young woman, aged six, devotedly attached to a dormouse; she lodged him in a box which had once held ipecacuanha lozenges, and tucked him about with wool, as though he were some fragile jewel. In the winter, perceiving him to shiver, she placed him tenderly just within the fender. The poor little fellow was suffocated, I am afraid (although we always told her it was apoplexy); and the distress of the child continued for a longer time than is the tribute of most deceased persons.

"My dear, dear little dormouse, and I took such pains to keep it warm; I did indeed."

Then there was a canary, which died in a very sad manner, the victim of a divided devotion, and the fact that everybody's business is nobody's business. His fate was that of Ugolino, and affected us all, both great and small, more than I should like to confess. Pretty Dicky, our sweet singer, dead in his cage, and no seed in his little box for days! More genuine tears were shed for him than falls to the lot of most blood-relations.

Well, the children did their best. They belonged to a clergyman's family in the country; and this was the procession I saw issuing from his house, and winding its sad way towards the kitchen-garden, where a duodecimo grave had been dug under a gooseberry-bush, with wooden spades. The chief mourner, aged eight, preceded it, bathed in tears, and carrying ostrich feathers on a little board, as though it was something going to the baker's. Then a small clergywoman, with a pair of papa's bands, and an enormous book, which she could scarcely carry, and manage the white sheet as well, which served her for surplice. Then the coffin borne by two trembling little ones, their

faces peeping out of the velvet pall which had once formed the skirt of their mother's dinner-dress. Lastly, the youngest child of the family, hardly sensible of the extent of the domestic calamity, but bearing the dinner-bell, with instructions to toll slowly. All of a sudden, "to these," as the old plays say, enter the real rector, rushing bareheaded out of the study, with ejaculations against this monstrous impiety. It was like a Catholic demonstration interfered with by Orangemen. "Such a shocking proceeding should not be permitted.—Who," he would like to know, "had put it into their heads?"

Mamma had lent the pall, and also the sheet, which they were to be careful not to drag in the mud. And presently mamma appeared (like the military) to put down both factions.

"I wont have it, my dear," cried the rector. "What will the neighbours say?"—this with an apprehensive eye at the high wall that interposed between the rectory and the village.

"Pooh, pooh. The children were really very fond of poor Dicky, you know."

"Well, at all events, they shall have no book,"

said the rector, snatching it away from his deputy.

"Why, it's downright wicked."

"It's the County Directory, my dear ; I thought it wouldn't hurt."

"Oh !" muttered the reverend gentleman, who had himself such a strong sense of humour as made the effort to repress it the severest trial in his professional life. But he carried his point : and though the funeral was allowed to proceed, the officiating minister was confined, even in appearance, to extemporaneous remark.

The observations of children are sometimes in themselves humorous, but more often unintentionally so. When the frozen-out gardeners came round last winter with their piteous cry, "We're all snowed *out*—we're all snowed *out*," a young lady of my acquaintance, aged six, quite ignorant of the laws of labour, and imagining these ejaculations to be the result of a peevish impatience of the bad weather, replied, "Well, and what of that? *we're* all snowed *in*."

The same young person, on hearing us discuss rather severely the character of a certain gentleman of better rank than manners, and who was accus-

tomed to give himself airs, inquired how that could be if he was always treating folks to porter. This was a dark saying for many days, but its elucidation came at length. This gentleman was accustomed, she had heard, to treat folks with *hauteur*. A ludicrously dissimilar characteristic from that imputed to him.

There is no particular genius about the young woman whose remarks I have quoted; but the charm of ignorance hangs about her very gracefully (and is likely to hang, for she loves lessons as a spaniel loves a stick). She belongs to a well-conducted family, however, who are not given to play-going or revelling of any sort; and when I had the privilege of taking her to the theatre the other night, it was quite a new world to her, and the adaptation of her old ideas to it was to me worth any number of farces. "Don't they mean to pull that blind up?" observed she of the green curtain; and "Do look at those nice little boys in the *next pew but one*." Finally, she electrified the house. The representation was a melodrama: the scene an old gentleman's study; the time midnight. He had just discovered certain letters which dis-

closed his beautiful wife's perfidy, and a number of other domestic calamities. She had just left the room in her dressing-gown, and with her golden hair dangling down to her feet, but he remained where he was, ejaculating remarks of the Othello type, and a good deal too many of them. The house got impatient, and especially my little friend, who had not of course the faintest idea of what it was all about. "Why don't *he* go to bed?" she suddenly inquired, in a tone of pathetic remonstrance, and at the top of her voice; and thereby evoked such a round of applause as the playwright would have given ten pounds to have earned.

I have hitherto spoken of little girls only, who are certainly more attractive than children of the other sex, and especially to papas. We men have a proverb to excuse our loving our daughters best:

My son's my son till he gets him a wife :
But my daughter's my daughter all my life ;

but, at all events, we generally lean that way, while the boys are mamma's darlings. That the girls remind us of our loving wives, and the boys

remind our wives of us, may partly account for our respective preferences: the gentle ways of the former are pleasant to the father, who comes home from toil and desires repose; the rough gambols of the latter delight the mother, and fill her with pride to see the germs of manly strength, endurance, and valour. "Don't make so much noise, you boys," is the stern dictum of papa; and certainly their fun is very often confined to practical jokes of a very noisy character. However, there is one boy that makes me laugh like the *Pickwick Papers*. He is not a good boy at his books, I am afraid; but he has a good disposition, and the utmost simplicity. He knows very little, and does not wish to increase his stock of knowledge. If a fine word, or one a little out of the common way, is thrust upon him, he uses it as other people do, without much investigation as to its meaning. He is taciturn, and don't want to talk; and if you bother him with questions, you must take the consequences. He don't pretend to know about fine words, but put him on a horse—have you seen his pony?—ah, then you *should*—and he will show you the way across the country.

I was inquiring one day about his school. It was kept by a clergyman I supposed ?

“ Yes, he supposed it was.”

And the usher, that he had been speaking about, was he a clergyman also ?

“ Well, no ; not exactly a clergyman : he was what is called a Beacon.”

“ Are you sure,” said I, with as much gravity as I could command—“ are you sure he is not a Deacon.”

“ Well, not sure : it might be a deacon or a beacon ; either one of those.”

“ But my dear Tom, think again.” [He had an objection to do this even once.] “ Don’t you really know whether he is a clergyman or not ?”

“ Yes, I do ; I remember now—he *is*.”

“ How do you remember that ?”

“ Why, you know there was a cricket-match near our school last half—all grown-up people, you know. A match between the Clergy and the Deity ; and our usher he played with the clergy.”

“ Not the Deity, surely, my boy—the Laity.”

“ Well, yes : I think it was the Laity,” said the imperturbable Tom.

But *he* is the funniest boy I ever knew. A wonderful Athlete, great at all sports ; as much at home in the water (and under it) as on land : when they buy him a gun, he will be the happiest creature on the face of the earth. Then he intends to marry and settle, because he shall be able to keep a wife with his gun, on rabbits. The lady of his choice, he once confided to me, " must be able to climb trees and swim about, and must not mind big dogs in her bedroom." That is his scheme for the future.

His younger sister, on the other hand, who beats him at figures as easily as at books, and who is already in compound long division, has chalked out a professional line of business for herself. " Papa dear, I mean to be ' Cash ' in a shop ; for Miss Setsoms" [her governess] " tells me I am such a good arithmeticker."

" Tician," exclaimed Tom, contemptuously ; and his mother fondly hoped that he was correcting her mistake ; but Tom was only sneezing.

The ideas of children about the battle of life, and the weapons necessary to be worn therein, are always touching from their simplicity (though

even more so when they are *not* simple ; when poverty, alas ! teaches even the youngest how to struggle for its crust). Papa and mamma are never to die ; and as for the necessaries of life, is it not the office of the baker and butcher to see that food is regularly supplied to families in town and country.

“ But supposing they *were* to die, little one—both papa and mamma—who would you have to love you then ?” asked one of a certain rosy-cheeked toddler, to whom I am graciously permitted to bow as she takes the air in her perambulator.

“ Love ?” returned she, in astonishment. “ Why, all peepy loves me, and I loves all peepy.”

How touching her mistake ! How tender is the smile evoked by her gigantic error ! And yet she has realized to herself the highest aspiration of Philosophy, and the noblest object of Religion.

I had intended this paper to be full of Maxims, but who can be sententious, wise, dogmatic about these little ones. It is they who teach us the true wisdom. However, concerning the relations between us grown-up folks and them, let me say no

entente cordiale can be expected unless we are gentle, kind, and reasonably patient with them. No severity should ever be used; for if the necessity arises for it, the fault is ours: something in the past has been suffered to go unreprieved. It is ourselves, not they, who do in reality deserve to be smitten. Some folks have an idea that children should be taught to "put up" with everything, whereas their sense of justice is most accurately delicate, and a wrong inflicted may warp their whole future character. "Provoke not your children to anger"—a saying, remember, spoken at a time when paternal authority was pushed to the extreme—ought to be written in every parent's secret-chamber. Above all things, show no favouritism, for every grain of one-sided love may produce its seed of hate. Nay, should you lose the less-loved child, you may feel that it would have been better to lose the other, such remorseful memories may its fate demand for years.

THE PROFESSIONS.

IT is curious enough that although our upper classes permit their male offspring to follow for years an expensive course of education, which prepares them for no subsequent line of life whatever, they attach a great importance to the choice of a profession in early life.

“My boy,” says one fond parent, with an air of self-sacrifice, “is wild to be a soldier, and although it will break his mother’s heart to let him go, I suppose I must.”

“But my case,” answers a sympathizing mother, “is much worse; for *my* boy is wild to go to sea.”

Stripped of romance, the predilection of youth for the military and naval professions chiefly lies in the idea that they will demand less study, fewer of those abhorred “lessons,” that, under whatever name you call them, will probably be unsavoury

to the nostrils of boyhood, but which (as I shall endeavour to show in a subsequent paper) we contrive to make as hateful to them as we can. They are "wild" (poor little fellows) to escape from Greek grammar, even if it were on board ship; "anywhere, anywhere, out of the"—school. This passion for the sea, in particular, is supposed to have something of a divine instinct about it, which it would be sacrilegious to check; yet in the case of the merry Swiss boy, "wild" for the marine service of his native country, he would have to get "tame," I conclude.

The fact is, ninety-nine boys out of a hundred are just as fit to be trained to one profession as another; and the hundredth will take his own line, no matter what you train him for. One parent flatters himself (and especially *herself*) that their own Tom is different from all the other Toms in the county, or their Terrace (if they live in town), and has an idiosyncrasy; whereas he is (almost) as likely to have feathers instead of hair. In the following remarks concerning the Professions, I have ventured to take as groundwork for reflection not *your* Tom, my good Pater and Mater-

familias, but the Tom from next door—the Ordinary Boy.

Let us first consider, then—*place aux dames*—“the Church” as a calling. I mean no disrespect to clergymen by that foreign phrase; but *imprimis* (as I have to confess) I know very little French, and am pleased to use it; and secondly, the association of ideas between Ladies and the Clergy is overpoweringly strong. It is a pity that it is so; it is much to be regretted that the “white throats” (as a naturalist of my acquaintance calls them) should so assiduously have cultivated the good opinion of the gentler sex, and made us males so jealous by their neglect. When I happen upon a divine (and I am thankful to say I know several such) who meets me in argument, in outspoken opinion, in bold candour, *like a man*, he seems to me, by contrast with his “snowy-banded, delicate-handed, dilettanti” brethren, a Hercules of debate. I wish the clergy well. I believe mainly (though that is of small consequence to the reader) in what *they* believe in. I think they do more good than any other professional class (save one) in the country; the majority of them are gentlemen in

the finer sense; the ridicule that is cast upon their honest work by would-be wits and very genuine ruffians, is hateful to me. But they commit the fatal fault of endeavouring to utilize that which can never be useful to any cause—prejudice, ignorance, unreasoning sentiment. Is it such a great triumph to so confuse the ideas of many nice old ladies as to make them dissatisfied even with Paradise, if it should not afford a “sweet preacher” and an ecclesiastical edifice with sittings? They live (most of them) so out of the world of men, that they know nothing of those whom it is surely as much their mission to edify as the other sex. I go to church, and hear denunciations of the Infidel—not present; eulogiums upon those who will “swallow formulas”—as Mr. Carlyle used to say before *he* began to flatter the genteel female. They know their congregations have an immense capacity for deglutition of this sort, and they work the vein in what, to me, I confess, appears quite a shameless manner. They cannot fail to know what sort of sins the folk who take pews by the year are inclined to, and what are those they have no mind to; yet they are for ever (I use the word in a

Hudibrastic sense) damning the wrong people—those who do not come to listen to them. A natural proceeding, it is true, but not one which (all things considered) does them credit. Suppose the chaplain of the Blind Asylum (he has written a very capital book about his flock, and I am sure would do nothing so injudicious) should confine his spiritual denunciations solely against those persons who had the gift of sight and practised it; restricted himself to Hudibrastically treating *eyes*! The thing has come to that pass indeed that the hundredth boy—the really exceptional Tom—might ask himself whether he should embrace a profession the entrance into which must place him at once in antagonism with almost all persons of intelligence of his own sex. Let him answer “Yes,” and join that scanty but sacred few, whom *all* respect, and those whose fealty is most worth having, love and honour. There *is* something womanly about them—a tenderness, a loving faith in poor humanity, a divine pity—very different from the clerical effeminacy of which I have spoken; but with that gentleness they have the power also which has the force to Save.

However, to our muttons and the golden fleece. The shepherd (even a good one) must shear the flock as well as tend it. Let us consider the calling of a clergyman from a stand-point more suitable for a Man of the World to take. It is always said that "the church is a wretched profession unless one has some ecclesiastical influence"—that is, unless there is a family living in prospect, or one's uncle is a bishop. "A curate is less well paid than a butler in a respectable family, and yet has to support the position of a gentleman," &c. Much of this reasoning, though specious, is fallacious. In the first place, it is something (even in a pecuniary point of view) that the fact of being a clergyman does insure this "position of a gentleman." Nobody inquires whether a curate's father is a baker or a candlestick-maker, except indeed the papa of the young lady whose affections he may have gained, and then it is probably too late to make objections. That process which is called at college "japanning," and elsewhere "taking orders," confers a social station not subject to question. You may endeavour to be an attorney (and even accomplish your object) without acquiring this; but the mere

“reading for orders,” or “being intended for the church,” has a flavour of gentility very pleasing to the tradesman who wishes his son to cut the shop, but has not the fortune to enable him to do so on the grand scale. Directly you get your country curacy (which is generally taken at first in preference to one in a town), you are free of at least all the *tea-tables* in the county; and you are asked *once* to dinner, even by the lord of the manor, unless he happen to be one of those few noblemen whose mode of domestic life is such that a clergyman must avoid his table. It is to this early patronizing that much of the aristocratic leaning of the clergy is doubtless due—a misfortune perhaps, as respects their future usefulness, but certainly a very natural consequence of their position. The Patron has livings as well as gracious hospitalities to bestow. “What are curates’ hopes?” asks a recent riddle? and the answer in a double sense is “Forlorn.”* But before they can be Bishops, it is necessary, or certainly usual, to be Rectors. True, their chances are not great;


* Or, “For Lawn, my good sir.”

but still they find themselves, at three-and-twenty or so, in a position which their father's son could not have otherwise obtained at double that age, and *with an income of a hundred a year*. "Very small," it is said; but I should like to know in what other profession do young men of twenty-three earn for themselves so much? Nay, what other profession does not *cost* them at least that sum for years to pursue it; and often without subsequent repayment? Remember, I am speaking solely of the ordinary Tom. The benefits of a *certain* income, however small, to him are unspeakable; for not only will he never be Lord Chancellor, nor even Sergeant-surgeon to the Queen (whatever that is), nor Field-marshal, nor Head Commissioner of Police, but it is probable he will not make his fortune in any line. It is therefore of great moment to him to secure early a sure and permanent wage.

Similarly, a most unmerited contempt is expressed by Tom's friends for a government clerkship. The position it confers is certainly inferior to that derived from a curacy; but its income, however slowly, steadily increases, and there is even

a rumour that assiduity and diligence have now-a-days been rewarded (if only in one or two instances) in a manner as gratifying as unexpected to the recipient. Let it never be forgotten, that although Tom may be "ordinary," diligence and assiduity are *not* ordinary, or at least are not to be found in every room of a Public Office. And if a government clerkship does *not* "lead to much," the days are coming, Tom, when no trade—not even that elegant calling of the diplomatic service into which you can still be smuggled by good favour—will lead to much to those whose work does not really deserve high pay.

The Bar is not a good profession for Tom at all. There are, it is true, some persons exceedingly like owls to you, reader, as you meet them prosing and blinking in the glare of society, who are successful as consulting barristers, or even in court with wig and gown, but then they have a natural aptitude for certain dry and intricate matters quite out of the ordinary ken. As a general rule, dull men get on worse at the Bar than in almost any other walk of life. It is the only calling wherein some spend all their lives, and yet never earn so much as the



rent of their rooms—which, by the way, is always ridiculously high. Even marriage with an attorney's only daughter will but procure you a few briefs, unless you have considerable talent for improving an opportunity; while the dismal waiting and watching for the opportunities that do *not* come, is enough to thin the stoutest. I do not know at what age the ambition to “get on in his profession” leaves a man: but I know men of five-and-forty who wear wigs and stuff-gowns in July, and perpetually hang about those wretched little law-courts at Lincoln's Inn, to the great detriment of their health (as I should suppose), yet with about as much chance of getting “business” as a bed-maker. They like loafing about there perhaps, listening to old So-and-so's judgment, or discussing the last new scandal about the Chancellor; but, for my part, I would as soon be the keeper of the Monument, who sees others go up and up all his life long, but who is content enough to stop where he is below, and skin and eat walnuts. Yet, for pleasant society, it must be confessed that the Bar is the most agreeable of all the (recognised) professions; there is more wit to be found there—al-


though too much of it is in the shape of "good stories," sometimes a little long, about the judges --and certainly more good sense in matters of opinion; albeit your barrister is prone to cynicism, and to express lower views of other men's motives than he really entertains, or than those which actuate himself. The fact is, although audacious enough against authority, he is exceedingly sensitive to ridicule.

The branch of the law which will suit Tom best, supposing any opening presents itself in any established firm, is without doubt that one the members of which wear their own hair, and are gentlemen by act of parliament. He should be an attorney. It is a calling expressly invented for the encouragement of dulness. It is impossible for a layman, who merely employs you to do his business for him, to find out what a fool you are. The most acute intellect, unless it chance also to have some attributes of the owl aforesaid, brought face to face for the first time with any legal document for the conveyance of house or land, must needs be baffled; it requires the patience of Job to wade through that jungle of verbiage, that "damnable

iteration" (it is Falstaff speaks), that useless and unnatural collocation of terms—all written in an unknown hand upon sheepskin. The idea of the rascal Wolf pretending that he can't write except on sheepskin, because it is the only stuff that lasts—not at all because he charges by the folio! Perhaps for Magna Charta it was well enough; but paper and print will soon be found sufficiently durable (unless I am very much mistaken) for all ordinary legal purposes. My good Tom, this gigantic system of imposture may last your time, and therefore be you an attorney; but danger is drawing nigh to all these shibboleths, beginning "Know all men by these presents;" lawyers will at no distant date be compelled to write plain English, and in words "understanded of the people" who have to sign their names at the bottom; perhaps there will not even be a wafer left to rest one's finger upon, as we utter those awful words: "I deliver this as my act and deed." The word "act" may even be held sufficient. The opponents of the Democratic rule which is coming as surely (and almost as swiftly) as to-morrow's sun, aver that it is the enemy of law; and it is

certain that it is opposed to law *forms*, for the unintelligibility of which no good reason can be shown. What! Have we sacrificed our grocers on the altar of common-sense, and yet shall we spare our attorneys? I trow not.

The Army. This is a tempting calling for the young. It demands certainly a little study; it offers constant boon-companionship; it supplies you (not, however, *gratis*) with a very becoming uniform; its professors are the idols of the young ladies. But somehow, as the lieutenant becomes a captain (or does *not* become, which is twenty times worse), and there is no chance of foreign service, the love of his calling too often changes to indifference. The fact is, it is dull work, that routine of barrack-life, and exposed to coarse and hurtful temptation. There are few humanizing influences; domesticity of course is very rare: and indeed the woman who weds a man in a marching regiment is bold enough to be a soldier herself. At the same time, there are many officers (and their number is increasing) who, not confining themselves to pipe-clay, make the comfort of their men their study; and if Tom has the good feeling



and the moral pluck to put his hand to that work, there is no more noble and rational calling for him than the military one. The purchase of a commission is not a good investment in a commercial point of view; but, like the taking Orders, it confers some incidental advantages which have a practical value. Your uniform may dazzle an heiress. You are certainly not overworked, and you are very well fed, the number of subscribers insuring a good table at a small outlay. Mess perhaps to the outsider may seem a little tiresome; but it must be surely pleasant to see around you your old fellow-comrades wherever you move: at least I can imagine few things more agreeable than a locomotive college. But a combination-room has this advantage, that you can express in it any views you may chance to entertain; whereas a mess-room, while lax enough about some things, is the very sanctuary of prejudice in matters of opinion. Perhaps a regiment, being a sort of Machine, regulated by authority, requires all its cogs and wheels to fit easily and work exactly together, and resents the intrusion of any foreign body (even if it be an idea) as though it were a

Frenchman; doubtless too from the centurion habit of saying "Go, and thou Goest," and the ready obedience that is paid thereto, not only is independence of thought discouraged, but the sense of Justice is by no means nice. A wrong at which even fashionable civilians grow indignant, and vulgar but healthy Public Opinion denounces as "an infernal shame," will often fail to excite any such feeling at the mess-table. However, to very many persons, and probably to Tom, this last consideration is a small matter. The Military, like the Civil Service, insures, if not a competency, a certain income, which may at the worst be made to suffice; and if what other folks call the Horrors of War should take place, there will be chances for Tom such as will be offered to him in no other profession, nor even in trade. In the latter case, he may appear in the *Gazette* to his ruin; whereas, if in the army such an incident should happen, it will lead him to such a pinnacle of fortune that he may die a K.C.B.

Upon the Navy these Maxims must be silent. "There are no (sea) serpents in this island." I know nothing of the naval profession, and have

therefore nothing to say, except to express my fervent hope that the gallant defenders of my country's seaboard are not so sick when they are afloat as I am.

Doctors. Healers of the sick, gratuitous ministers of the poor ! I lift my hat to you with sincere respect and approbation. When I said a while ago that there was one calling which conferred even greater benefits on humanity than the clergy, it was to yours that I referred. There are doubtless Quacks, Charlatans, Money-grubbers of a vile sort, even among *your* honourable body, as elsewhere ; you tell me so yourselves indeed (for you abuse one another as though you were all Irish, and are the most jealous set of people under the sun) : but, for my part, I have seen few specimens of your calling otherwise than generous and kindly hearted ; your good deeds, within my own personal knowledge (although oftentimes you do not know it, for you do them by stealth), are as many as are the hairs of my head—and I am not yet *very* bald. There is another most admirable quality about you : you have always something to say that has an interest ; this is not only because you are conversant

with diseases such as are incident to all of us (although *that* is something, for there are few things one likes to talk of so much as our own present or probable maladies), but from your opportunities of observing Human Nature on occasions when it is necessarily frank, you have always extracts with which to favour us out of that delightful book. An enemy of yours (but of everybody's), and a great wit, once observed to me that doctors, considered as conversable companions, were "like cheroots—you never get a very good one, but you never get a very bad one." I allow the latter part of his verdict, though not the former. For a chance companion, give me a doctor; and of the two divisions of the calling, let it be a surgeon. So long as you can keep him off the subject of that impostor So-and-so (another scientific gentleman, who has more aristocratic patients than he has), his talk is excellent. I don't refer merely to his creepy, crawly stories of blood and bones, (although I am passionately fond of *them*), but to the incidental portions of his narratives, so characteristic and illustrative of the great family of Man. I have heard that the plots of many of the most interesting

novels of the present day are suggested to the authors by their medical attendants. If it be so, this only adds another item to the long list of obligations which we owe to the Faculty. I have always done what I could for them (short of remunerating them as their services have deserved) all my life. I have never hesitated to express my contempt for homœopathy, in which, if a man believes, he will believe in anything. At the same time it must be confessed that if those infinitesimal globules do no good ("You might just as well——" But no; I dare not quote my dear friend Allopath's too forcible remark), they are at least tasteless; and why, O why are Allopath's drugs so filthy and detestable? After four thousand years of medical science, a black dose is just as abominable as it was to Noah in the Ark: I say Noah, because the want of exercise probably made him (or at all events some members of the family) bilious. Now, how is this, gentlemen of the Faculty? Why have your pills that unspeakably sickening smell about them which causes a shiver in my spinal marrow? Why is castor-oil permitted to exist in its present demoniacal condition? You don't take these things

yourselves, I suppose: indeed, I know you don't. You take nothing that is good for you—or which you say is good for *me*; and you commit more imprudent acts in the way of eating and drinking than any people I meet. *This* indeed may be in the hope that your example may lead us to become your patients; but there is no such excuse for the hatefulness of your drugs. The permanency of the nuisance shakes my faith in your scientific ability; you can cure evil smells by disinfectants, then why not evil tastes? I do hope that after the publication of this friendly protest, you will remove this blot upon your reputation.

The receipts of a doctor being (in the main) in proportion to his abilities, I cannot hopefully recommend the calling to honest Tom. It affords the largest incomes (except the law) of any of the professions, but also (except the law) exhibits specimens of the smallest. Some country practitioners (to judge by their parochial salaries) push Science to its utmost limits in their endeavours to live upon air. If a few M.D.'s and F.R.C.'s ride in chariots and are made baronets, there are many who, for very hard work, receive very small pay; and both

rich and poor often give their time and skill to those who cannot afford to purchase it. It is no wonder to those who know doctors best that the Good Physician should have been taken as the highest type of Humanity.

The time has not yet quite come, although the signs of its advent are numerous, for the social gulf between the Professions and Commercial Pursuits to be bridged over. But many a young man of family and connexions regrets that his parents had not been a little less genteel in their views of his future ; especially regrets that two thousand pounds were spent upon his first-class education, when two hundred would have secured him a better one, and the remainder have gone to help to purchase for him a share in some thriving business in the City. I am not myself a believer in the popular creed which ascribes to "men of business" a peculiar sagacity and discernment. With our railways and joint-stock banks in the condition in which we see them, it is impossible to credit the persons who have brought them to that pass with any mental endowments of the sort. If they have managed matters themselves, or have been the victims of

knaves (as they assert), their intelligence is equally contemptible. But, putting aside any such unfounded claims, Commerce is a grand calling, and those who despise it are very weak folks indeed. It seems to me that to be one of the two heads of some active firm (no matter how small its operations, if they be only growing), and *where your co-partner is also your friend* (an essential point), is to pursue one of the pleasantest of crafts. Is it not the entering into a commercial marriage, so that your hopes and fears, your good fortune and your failures, are always shared and sympathized with, and where your plans and projects are your common children? That must surely be very nice—when it happens; but sometimes I remark there are divorces—dissolutions of partnership—through incompatibility of temper, I presume, since there can be no co-respondents in such cases save that which is spelt with two *rs*.*

There is one profession which, although scarcely recognised, embraces all the others—Literature.

* Correspondence, Tom; "I am in receipt of your esteemed favour," and that sort of jargon; all which by-the-bye is absurd, and reminds one of the shibboleths of the law.

"Soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors, gentlemen, apothecaries, ploughboys, thieves" (even), all belong to that now. Parsons write as much as they preach (and I must say, better): barristers are great scribblers: so are government officials—indeed the post-office (perhaps through its association with letters) is a most prolific mother of modern writers. Something, therefore, must be said here about Literature, although it does not concern Tom in the least. (It is not possible for poor ordinary Tom to make ten pounds a year at it. A few popular writers indeed are said to be great fools—but that is not being ordinary people.) But, you see, I am what is called "a gentleman connected with literature" myself, and the subject is delicate. Not that literary folks are sensitive at all: O dear, no: nor jealous of each other's successes. It's all rose-colour—this calling of authorship—it is really. Generally speaking, we love one another; although, of course, we have our prejudices. We are not rich—not one of us. The greatest geniuses among us, to whom the world will be grateful for generations to come, do not make so much *per annum* as many a parliamentary barrister whose

place, if he died to-morrow, could be supplied by his fac-simile. But Literature is a better trade, even in this respect, than it *has* been, and some day (when American publishers permit) it will be duly remunerated. In the meantime, if we have not wealth, we have something. We can spend our lives where we will. If any literary gentleman's genius is so erratic as to cause him to prefer the country to London, he may go to Jericho—no, *not* to Jericho, because of the uncertainty of the book and manuscript post, but to Coventry, if he likes, and live *there*. And wherever he lives, he may do pretty much as he pleases. Society, so exacting with all other callings, is lenient to this one. She does not impose obligations upon him—to keep a page, or to rent a pew. He is treated by her with much the same sort of favour as Idiots are among the North American Indians. The Great Spirit has put a bee in his bonnet, and they not only forbear to criticise, but regard him with considerable approbation. I wish the gentlemen who write reviews would do the same. They are the thorns in the rose bush of Literature. The young author—I say the “young” one, because as we grow old, kindly

Nature enwraps us with a hide similar to that of the rhinoceros, and besides we are more or less "established," so that the darts of criticism have less power to assail our position—the young author regards the critic exactly as a barrister regards an attorney; he despises him from the bottom of his soul, but pays him the most respectful court. The general public is, of course, the author's real client, but he cannot approach *him* (in the first instance) save through the intervention of this third party; hence his hypocritical self-humiliation. Another foe, by the by, of the author, if he be a novelist at least, is the Divine. As there is nothing which a professional actor hates more than an amateur, so there is no class of person whom the clergyman regards with such animosity as the lay preacher; the uncommissioned, unauthorized fellow, who, under pretence of writing a story, endeavours to inculcate his own views and opinions. But then the author and the parson are not brought much into connexion with one another, whereas the author and the critic are. The latter has the enormous advantage of putting into print the very low opinion he entertains of the former's talents; the former has to keep his

opinion to himself, or rather (for he *does* express it, to restrict it to the circle of his private friends. Some authors are very bitter; but for *my* part—although I would scorn to utter one syllable of flattery to gain the applause of all the newspapers in the three kingdoms—I know no critical organs which I do not reverence and admire for their sterling honesty and excellent taste. What a kindly appreciation of merit (even in an unknown writer); what a tender regard for personal feeling combined with the strictest sense of literary justice; what a careful culling of the beauties of the work in hand, to present them in the most favourable form to public view; and what an avoidance of the temptation to be merely smart at the poor devil's expense! This, at least, is what I have always found myself enabled to say with respect to *my* critics—with the exception (which proves the rule) of one or two, whom I may dismiss with the observation that they are contemptible and malignant idiots.

Among authors, there are still one or two lineal descendants of Richard Savage and his like, unprincipled, untrustworthy scamps, and also a few

“feckless” persons to whom we owe it that the old opinion of men of letters being thoughtless and improvident is not quite exploded ; but upon the whole, we are prosperous and respectable enough to be churchwardens. If my life were to be lived again, I would wish to join no other than that pleasant brotherhood of which I have been, these now so many years, a humble and unworthy, but still, I hope, a faithful member. O able, willing hands, long dust, that were stretched out to aid me ! O great, true hearts, long cold, that spoke to me, through favouring lips, the words of hope ; I would my thanks could reach you in the grave ! And you, and you, the living—the men who tower above such as I as trees above the shrubs—how much I owe you, and how much I love you—Friends.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES.

MEN of the world are rarely what is usually understood by the term "well educated;" they are not scholars: they know nothing of science; and their favourite literature is almost always fiction. Still they have usually had opportunities of learning as great (or at all events as expensive) as fall to the lot of any men, and even on this ground, now that such a stir is being made about public school and university education, it may be conceded to one of them to say a few words on that matter. But there is another and a better reason why he should be listened to. Men of the World form a portion of that enormous class with whom education has led to no practical result; they have been through the whole *curriculum* of Latin and Greek study, as developed at our best seminaries, and have each spent a small fortune

(never under two thousand pounds) in acquiring, at school, "the Tone," at college, that *Je ne sais quoi*, which is only to be procured at two university towns in Great Britain. It is a great price to pay for those subtle impalpable advantages, yet I do not question their value: what I do object to is the entertainment of the idea that we get anything else "thrown in"—such as information (useful or otherwise), learning, expansion of the mind, cultivation of an intellectual taste, &c. As for myself, I have been "educated" at an expense of from one hundred pounds to two hundred and fifty pounds a year for twelve years, and have learned nothing—I say it, in all literalness, NOTHING.

Of course, this is not the case with the pattern boys; the youths who have won scholarships and fellowships, and for whom the whole system is really founded and suffered to go on; but then how very few they are in comparison with such as I. Is it not monstrous that their voices should be the only ones listened to in this controversy! "Listen to us," say they, "for it is we alone who know anything about it." It is like a mysterious priesthood this high education business, and the public are the ignorant

worshippers, on no account to be admitted within the veil. They are only to sacrifice their sons to the Moloch of Grammar, and open their purse-strings that the costly juggle may be carried on. If it were not for the school and college prizes, which at present are solely reserved for those who distinguish themselves in the old grooves of study—and which are very well worth gaining *to those who get them*—a new road to learning, if not royal, at all events far broader and more attractive, would have long ago been made. And the longer the work is put off, the more complete (it is pleasant to think) will be the change when it does come.

Grammar! Of all the uninteresting, unintelligible studies that can be found to disgust a boy with learning at the first start, this is the dullest, baldest, and to *him* (which is of great importance) the most objectless. As if to render the subject as dark and difficult as possible, it is not English grammar that is taught, but only Latin and Greek grammar; and in these the very rules at the great schools are written in Latin. Thus, language, subject, and object, are rendered as opaque as can be

desired, or at least so it seemed up to within the last twelve months or so, when, in order to secure uniformity of Shibboleth, the Public School Primer was invented. It was here that the classical schoolmasters made their great mistake. Long submission on the part of parents, guardians, and boys, had led them to imagine that there was no limit to their authority—that they might go any length in educational absurdity without exciting revolt. The country squires—the great supporters of “the system,” and believers in “the Tone”—had from generation to generation suffered themselves, and sent their sons to suffer under the grammatical harrow, but the sudden appearance of a New Grammar—the Primer—more unintelligible and learnedly idiotic than even its predecessors, was too much even for these devotees. They had always felt a pity for their Toms and Harrys, condemned to that tread-mill of moods and tenses, of which they had never made anything themselves; they had sympathised with them secretly in their intense hatred of Aorists of all descriptions; but they had accepted grammar as a necessary evil—a disease incident to the state of

boyhood; and although it had done them no good, the ill effects of it (as they imagined) had not been lasting. They did not take into account the years lost in conjugating Greek verbs, the English of which they never knew, or the distaste such senseless jargon had given them for study of all kinds. But the Public School Primer, having lucklessly found its way into the *Times*, opened the eyes of even these. They confidentially inquired of their professional advisers, and others, what the deuce was the meaning of this new-fangled gibberish, and the universal reply was, that it had no meaning at all. Members of the learned professions, and men of business, who had acquiesced, but not without some shrugging of the shoulders, in the expensive and unpractical education which the public schools provided for their offspring, were now thoroughly aroused to a sense of its futility and absurdity. If they, with their practical wits and full-grown abilities, could make neither head nor tail of these abstruse and long-winded terms (about which the schoolmasters themselves were fighting), what sort of a text-book, or first round of the ladder of

learning, was this Primer likely to make for their unhappy boys? For the first time the school-masters and their learned supporters (solely those who had gained their ends by the study of the first shibboleth, and who entertained the very natural idea that the mysterious jargon, or its like, which had proved so good for them—in the gaining of scholarships and fellowships—must be good for everybody), for the first time, I say, this small but powerful party found itself confronted and opposed by the universal Common Sense. The New Primer surpassed the old grammars in grandiloquence of expression, in unintelligibility of definition, and generally in objectless no-meaning, but the outcry against it caused those ancient offenders, the Grammars, to be also brought up and examined at the bar of public opinion, just as the apprehension of some atrocious miscreant will often place in peril other evil-doers, who have had no share in his particular crime.

Poor *Propria quæ maribus* and *As in Præsenti* were placed in the dock : *Τυπρω Τυψω* (of necessity strongly guarded) and a long line of detestable

tenses and vile moods were arranged behind them; the irregular verbs were manacled together as well as their defective or scarcely recognisable limbs would permit; the passive verbs alone being free from constraint. It was with difficulty that those of the audience who had been to classical schools could be restrained from the most violent expressions of hatred and contempt.

To drop metaphor, people began to speak their minds for the first time about the rubbish, called Grammar, which had been so lavishly shot over them in youth; and about those studies of the dead languages in which they had consumed more than ten years of life, and of which absolutely nothing remained in their minds except a few hackneyed quotations, only useful (or ornamental) to that very small section of them who happened to be in Parliament. In the midst of this great discouragement, a heavy blow fell suddenly, from a most unsuspected quarter, upon the high-priests of Shibboleth. Those eminent personages had hitherto kept their wickets, although they had not dared to "swipe,"

by insisting upon the public Ignorance. They folded their Dominies' robes about them, and with a calm smile assured us that they knew what was best for our boys (as their predecessors had known in our case), and that every true scholar was upon their side. It was impossible that a man who had once mastered Grammar, and appreciated its advantages, could place anything else in comparison with it as the foundation of learning.

Then up rose Mr. Lowe, "the Scholar, the Dialectician," and made confession in the face of all the people. "I am a Pharisee of the Pharisees in this matter," said he. "I know as much of their gibberish as the best of them. I have been through the whole dismal business, from first to last, and it's a complete and utter failure!"

As a Man of the World, I am not much interested in public life or public men, but I should like to shake the hand of Mr. Robert Lowe. It is one thing to know the Truth, and another to speak it. What a number of scholarly gentlemen must be secretly conscious of their edu-

cational shortcomings, and yet there is only One who has had the moral courage to own to the deficiency! Again, it is easy enough to rail against studies of which one knows nothing—albeit, I submit that after twelve years of expensive application one ought to know a little—but how different and how difficult to condemn them when we are ourselves their chosen depositaries! Suppose there are a thousand people in this country thoroughly acquainted with Latin and Greek, and of that thousand you are yourself among the ten best scholars—do you not think it requires an honesty above the common to confess to the futility—or, at all events, to the inadequacy—of your own acquirements! Everybody who is in more or less exclusive possession of any knowledge is apt to exaggerate its importance. How well does old Jeremy Taylor express this: “Man,” he says, “is hugely apt to esteem himself better than his brethren, if he knows some little impertinences, and them imperfectly, and that with uncertainty”—wherein, it is evident, he is thinking of the Greek language, and the idle con-

troversies always being waged about it. And if, besides the possession of this exclusive knowledge, a man has found his gain in it—such as three hundred a year, and comfortable quarters for life—how, in the name of gratitude, as well as reason, can you expect him to do otherwise than speak well of the bridge that has carried him from poverty to sufficiency? You might as well expect (to return to our old metaphor) the priest of some heathen deity, who lives by the offerings of the faithful, to tear down with his own hands the veil from before the Sanctuary, and exhibit to public view the feet of clay on which the idol stands.

I am sorry to vulgarise this extremely gentlemanly question, by introducing into it the element of cost, but I really do think that that branch of the subject deserves some consideration.* We are all aware that—

* I cannot, as one who has acquired "the Tone," bring myself to allude to the miserable details of misexpenditure except in a foot-note; but I would respectfully inquire whether there are sufficient masters at any public school to properly look after the culture of those young gentlemen who are not passionately attached to study—that is, nineteen-

When house and land are gone and spent,
Then Learning is most excellent ;

but is it worth while to spend house and land—or their equivalent, namely two thousand pounds and upwards—*upon* Learning, and especially upon that description of learning which (save in the very exceptional cases already alluded to) produces no practical result ? A more helpless creature, in the matter of getting his own living, is scarcely possible to be imagined than the gentleman of two-and-twenty who has just succeeded in getting his

twentieths of the boys committed to their charge. That a great school should produce annually a few good scholars, is no such marvel, but in what sort of intellectual condition does it turn out its average youth ! Let the head master still continue to enjoy from eight thousand to three thousand pounds *per annum* ; and the under-masters reap their golden harvest in due proportion. But do let us have a few preceptors added, less ornamental and expensive, who will see that something is done. Similarly, if tutors and lecturers at the university were supplemented by private tutors—not *extra* as at present, but as part of the course—might not some sort of learning be really imparted ? At present (not to be rude), I believe that the system pursued both at school and college is the most perfect that polite imposture and gentlemanly credulity have ever combined to produce.

ordinary B.A. degree at Oxford or Cambridge : nay, even if he has taken honours (except, of course, they were high ones), he is qualified for nothing better (unless he takes holy orders and a curacy), than to be an usher in a school.

The ordinary British boy of tolerable position learned, in my time, of a governess, to read and write, and the elements of Latin and Greek, up to about nine years old, when he went to his first boarding-school—preparatory for the great public seminaries of learning. Here he remained, at a total cost of about three hundred pounds, until he was about twelve years old, when he was removed to (suppose) Eton. The cost of maintenance of a boy at Eton is (or was), if in a dame's house, about 180*l.* a year ; if at a tutor's, about 250*l.* Taking the mean cost (and if I am wrong in the calculation, it must be remembered that I never was taught such intellectual feats), the Etonian, at eighteen, had put his parents to an expense of 1290*l.* + the previous three hundred. The university now awaited him, at which, if we allow him 250*l. per annum* for his three years' residence, he would not enjoy an income above the undergraduate

average. When he has taken his degree, this young gentleman of one-and-twenty would have cost his parents 2340*l*. If his charges at the preparatory school were a little less, or he went to Rugby instead of Eton, the expense would not have been quite so great ; but, on the other hand, we must remember that the vacations of the university are very long, and often demand a private tutor. To be quite within the mark in this matter, however, let us put down the education of a young English gentleman at two thousand pounds. A small fortune ; a sum, remember, the interest of which would produce an income equal to that of curate or usher ; an amount of money which probably exceeds the young man's whole fortune, if he happen to be a younger son. "Thank God, I have given my boys a good education," says many a well-meaning and unselfish father, "and now they must shift for themselves."

As for me, my education cost my parents more than two thousand pounds ; it was carried on at private and public schools, at a private tutor's, and at the university, and was almost wholly classical. I learned (but by no means in the sense of understanding) Latin and Greek grammar ; the art of

writing Latin verse—a sort of joiner’s work, inexpressibly stupid and meaningless ; and Latin composition (though not a boy that I ever came across could express his ideas in English.) I could also translate Latin pretty well, but Greek never, without a lexicon and infinite pains. Forty-nine fiftieths of us had neither the taste nor the capacity for poetry, even in our own tongue, but the works of Greek and Latin poets (confound them) were our daily tasks, and it may be imagined how we appreciated them ! At the university, things were almost as bad ; Greek and Latin—Latin and Greek. How I wished that there was but one copy of Euripides and Æschylus bound together, that I might destroy it at my private hearth. And here I must be allowed to say that university lecturers are sometimes either very dull folks, or very disingenuous. At twenty, I knew as much of English literature as most of them, was passionately fond of it (especially of the poets), and certainly recognised the difference between words and ideas. Therefore—although I made no pretence of understanding the original—when the lecturer *translated* from his author, and exhibited the metaphor, the

reflection, the description, for our edification, and dwelt upon their unparalleled beauties, *I knew that these did not exist*. Then the inextinguishable hatred that I entertained for the Greek language from its pestilent grammar upwards, changed (most unreasonably, I own) to contempt. Not only did it seem to me that I was being taught unpleasant and useless things, but that I was being imposed upon. The particular work that excited my indignation was *The Seven against Thebes*, which I will take leave to say, albeit it was written by Æschylus [if I remember that much about it rightly], is as windy, wordy, and idealess a composition as exists, and if it had not chanced to be in Greek, would never have been promoted to the honours of type. To endeavour to persuade a youth of literary and poetic taste that that play is a Great Work, is not only futile, but most mischievous. Of course, such of the young gentlemen in the lecture-room as were striving for scholarships and fellowships swallowed *The Seven*, just as they would have swallowed the Talmud had it been of advantage to their future career; but the condition of the other three-fifths of us was really pitiable.

Surely this poking of Greek play down the average throat is a great absurdity ! To forty-nine out of fifty English youths, poetry of all sorts is unintelligible. [From grammar to Æschylus, it really seems essential to teach them *nothing* that they can understand !] Out of a whole university lecture-room, there are not ten men who could paraphrase a poem out of *In Memoriam*, or a difficult speech of Shakspeare's ; and even of those who gain fellowships, how few there are who appreciate the ideas of the poets they have studied so long.

From the young barrister, doctor, soldier, or gentleman at ease, who has taken his degree of B.A., all the classical knowledge he has acquired in his twelve years' training glides away from him in a twelvemonth, like water from a duck's back. As for me, in much less time than that, I was totally innocent of Greek (enough of which, by help of "cribs," I had "crammed" to pass my examination) ; almost denuded of Latin ; and, I am truly thankful to say, in possession of scarce a single quotation from either language. I knew arithmetic well, and a most unusual acquisition it was by my undergraduate friends considered to be ; but I

knew little more of it than what my mother and my governess had taught me thirteen years ago. To them I was indebted for the arts of reading and writing—the latter, by-the-bye, much deteriorated by the system of “impositions” at school. To myself, I owed a taste for literature, and some knowledge of English composition. As for my schools and schoolmasters, and that time-honoured university course, I honestly believe that—excepting “the Tone,” the *Je ne sais quoi*, and above all, the really invaluable friendships made at college—a Fivepound Note would more than represent any value received from all the educational establishments at which I have had the honour to be.

I was not an idle boy: I always did (although, indeed, without the slightest interest in the work) the tasks imposed upon me; and I never got into disgrace. Ignorant as I was, when I ceased to be an infant in the eye of the law (but almost as powerless as an infant to ~~make~~ my own living), I knew more than most of my contemporary college friends. I really had (no thanks to my teachers) acquired a good deal of information, through browsing upon every interesting book that came in my way. I

had no habits of study whatever—the thing, by-the-bye, the classical system prides itself on imparting—but I had got through whole libraries of miscellaneous reading. I could spell—which scarcely one of my friends could do with certainty; I knew something about history and politics; a very little geography; and as much mathematics as is taught to the first class of a good village school. It was not therefore the greatness of my own ignorance so much as the stupendousness of that of my friends—brought to light for the first time by mixing with men who had *not* been exclusively learning Latin and Greek for the last twelve years—which struck me so vividly, and caused me to inquire what we had each received in exchange for our two thousand pounds. I remember feeling a blush of shame when I first found myself at a dinner-party where there chanced to be foreigners, and everybody spoke French except myself and one other highly-educated youth. Again, never shall I forget sitting by the side of an intelligent young American at dinner, and overhearing a conversation between him and his neighbour Buffles—a most excellent young fellow, and who “polished off” Latin verses

at school in a manner which gave great (though illusive) promise of his success at the university: the Yankee, it must be confessed, was very inferior to my old schoolmate in manners, and although quite as much at his ease, had an air of self-assertion that smacked, to the fastidious sense, of a tavern parlour: but he was a gentleman (Transatlantic) nevertheless, and knew far more about English history, English politics, English literature, than ninety-nine hundredths of English gentlemen of his own age, who have had the best education which England can give. And to hear him apply for information to Buffles! I protest it made me hot all over. I will take my oath that Buffles had never read a play of Shakspeare's or a line of Shelley; indeed, I doubt whether he had ever heard of the latter bard. As to science, the Yankee described a certain accident that had happened to the intricate machinery of the steamer in which he had come across, with such a touching confidence that a son of scientific, working England must needs understand all he was saying, that I had not the heart to undeceive him; whereas I had (and have) no more notion how it is that a steamer is

ropelled—except that the paddles strike the water—than of what the Tycoon of Japan wears next to his skin.

It is said by some that mere information is of no consequence, or, at all events, does not need teaching, since it can be so easily acquired. Nay, it is even asserted (I must say rather impudently) that the classical system does not pretend to do more than teach men to educate themselves—as though one man out of fifty ever took to learning when he found himself at liberty to avoid it, and particularly after the relish for it acquired through grammar and *The Seven against Thebes*! I do not pretend to say what ought to be taught, but I am well convinced that the acquisition of such disjointed snatches of jargon as *as in præsenti* or *πρω, τυψω* (I can't go through it for my life)—which alone remain in my memory to remind me that I have had a classical education—is not very valuable. I remember those two admirable sentences, because on each hangs a little witticism, and a little wit goes as far in classics as in the House of Commons. There was a very free translation made of the former, which ran thus: *as in*

præsenti, ready money, *perfectum format*, always ends, *in avi*, in a lark. The latter I remember from its slight similarity to a certain Greek *irregular* verb, made in England at the time of the cholera; *γρειπω*, *γρειψω*, it began—but I can't go through with *that*. These jokes are not new, I am well aware, and it is quite possible that they may not be very good; but since I paid at least a thousand pounds apiece for them, I value them exceedingly.

OPINION.

PERHAPS the best test of a man's being a Man of the World (in the best sense of that expression) is founded on the manner in which he behaves himself in matters of opinion; how he expresses his own views, and how he receives the views of others who happen to differ from him. It is impossible for a man who has really mixed much with a variety of his fellow-creatures to remain a bigot—or at all events an offensive one—in this respect. You may see a great deal of folks of your own kidney, and yet—just as a chess-player may not only not improve, but deteriorate by constantly playing with those who have but one plan—you may only grow more obstinate and besotted; and you may travel to the ends of the earth, (as a Jesuit missionary, for instance), and only, “like copper-wire, become the narrower by going further,” because illiterate and

savage folks have no opinions to be called so, and in comparison with their childish notions, your own ideas seem of incalculable value. But a man who has passed his days among civilized and intelligent persons, of various callings, and has avoided falling into that quicksand of cultivated existence, a Clique, may be always depended upon not to create any discomfort by his mode of stating his own opinions, and generally even upon putting down any other person inclined to offend the company by uncharitable violence. Indeed a genuine Man of the World may be looked upon as a sort of special constable for the preservation of peace and quietness, and the maintenance of social enjoyment, against brawlers; a very different sort of fellow, be it remarked, from him who often usurps the title of Man of the World upon the ground that one opinion is as good as another, since there is nothing new nor true, and everything is a bore. This last individual is generally a finiking creature, who, if he did not chance to have been born to a "good position"—that of a guardsman or an unpaid attaché—would have found his proper position as a man-milliner.

The expression of opinion among men, when socially gathered together, does not take place, as a general rule, until "the ladies have withdrawn." Of all the allegations that have been so ungallantly urged against the fair sex, it seems to me that this is the best founded—that they do not interest themselves at all in matters which are most worth talking about. They are thinking of their dress, and (especially) thinking of what the other women are thinking of it. "They overwhelm society," says an American writer, "with superfluous dry goods. When ladies are present, the whole affair becomes a mere question of costume. They dress too, not for the purpose of giving pleasure to men, but for that of inflicting pain on one another. Besides, a lady who is carrying a considerable estate upon her person must devote a great part of her attention to the management of the estate. She may be talking to Mr. Smith about Shakspeare and the musical glasses, but the thing her mind is really bent upon is crushing Mrs. Smith with her new lace." This is mainly true, except that it is rare to hear ladies talk of Shakspeare, unless the Prince and Princess of

Wales may chance to have lately patronized one of his plays. Similarly, they do not speak of any religious question, unless some favourite clergyman has been recently ventilating it; nor have they any interest in politics (beyond a general apprehension that genteel institutions are in danger, and that there is even a possibility of there being no House of Lords), unless their husband or brother has been concerned of late on the blue side or the yellow. Now, men (though there are more dull men, perhaps, than dull women, and though men have certainly the gift of prosing in a more full degree) do, to do them justice, take interest in other matters beside merely personal ones. Every one of them, however intellectually insignificant, has his own notions of how the State ought to be governed, and even of the eternal principles on which the administration of the Universe is conducted. Each is prepared to go to the stake upon such abstract questions as the rights of property, the training of horses, the benefits which guano confers on crops, the State provision for the poor, the genius of Mr. Browning, the voluntary theological system, and the vintages.

Of course, the ideas expressed are often queer enough, but, however worthless in themselves, they are characteristic of their professors. They indicate at once to the intelligent observer what sort of man he has to deal with, and, as it were, buoy for him the channels of conversation, while the less sagacious skippers, unobservant of these danger-signals, go bumping, and grounding, and colliding, till the confusion becomes inextricable, and there is perhaps a row.

I am only speaking of London life, for in the country there is no great variety of after-dinner man ; but let us just consider the divers kinds of opinions that one hears expressed over the mahogany, from Notting Hill to Russell Square, and from Kilburn to Eaton Square.* While the ladies continue with us, the talk is smooth and shallow, and the winds of controversy are hushed ; but no sooner has the last ample skirt swept round the dining-room door, than General Chowler, C.B., who has gallantly risen with the rest, but violently re-

* It is noticeable, by-the-bye, that the wildest notions are always to be found in the most cultivated places.

sents even that small amount of exertion after food, inquires huskily whether any man ever heard such sickening and treasonable rubbish as was talked by that fellow Bright in the House last night on the question of reduction of the army estimates. Mr. Eugene Mildmay, who has just hitched his chair into the space left between him and the General by the departure of his late neighbour, here hitches it back again, and proceeds to observe, with unctuous distinctness, that so far is he from thinking Mr. Bright's scheme to be treasonable, he considers it most reasonable, since a standing army in any form is a standing reproach to a country; but an army which is officered by purchase, if it were not such a grievous injustice, may be called a standing joke.

Now, the Man of the World, although his own opinion may be far from coinciding with that of either of these gentlemen, does not set each of them down in his own mind, at once, as a fool or a fanatic. He finds something to agree with in both of them, or, at all events, nothing to quarrel about in either; and he well knows that but for the indiscreet violence of the General, the member of the

Peace Society would not have used the most offensive weapons of speech which he could lay his tongue to. He calms their mutual animosities ("Saves bloodshed, even," says the host, when afterwards expressing his acknowledgments to this skilful arbiter,) and presently discovers in Chowler a mine of really humorous anecdote, and opens in Mildmay a vein of sparkling epigram. That each of the combatants is still convinced in his own mind that the other ought in the interests of society to be hung, does not prevent the party from "going off" with pleasant geniality after all.

The possession of extreme opinions is no harm in anybody, nor even the expression of them, provided that all personality is avoided; it does not require a Man of the World to keep clear of this, but it does require a gentleman. If men are so unhappily constituted as to be impatient of all ideas that are antagonistic to their own, they should dine at home, and only ask guests who agree with them. They have no right to accept an invitation to join a mixed company, since they are wanting in what every guest is supposed to come furnished with--

namely, a courteous forbearance. They would not think of coming in their shirt-sleeves ; why, then, should they venture to come, when they are conscious that they do not possess the decent mantle of charity. Of course, no man who is in a position to be asked out to dinner gives his neighbour the lie direct : I refer to behaviour a little less coarse than that, but equally offensive. For instance, suppose (for one may suppose anything) that my views happen to be strongly in favour of authority ; suppose I am an upholder of the powers that be even in somewhat extreme cases ; suppose I greatly admire the aristocracy of my native land ; and suppose I express those opinions. It would be something much worse than bad taste if an after-dinner adversary should hint in reply that snobs, or toadies, or sycophants, were the particular objects of his dislike ; for it would be impossible to misunderstand the personal application of his remarks, and of course to avoid resenting them. Or, on the other hand, suppose I am a “despiser, not of dignities (for that is forbidden), but of the people who fill them,” and express a wish that there was no such thing as an Hereditary Chamber. It would

then be a most disgraceful reply in my antagonist to say, that he had always found that persons who affected to dislike lords were the most servile towards them in their behaviour, and were only hostile to persons of title because they themselves possessed no handles to their names.

By such ruffianly replies as these, nothing whatever is gained from the adversary except an irreconcilable enmity, while the harmony of the company, which all are bound by the laws of hospitality to maintain, is marred for the evening. Of course, such outrageous conduct is not common ; but I am sorry to say it does occasionally occur. In the country, indeed, it is quite usual to quarrel upon politics, although in London we very properly hold it to be a mark of bad breeding. We agree where we can, and where no point of sympathy is to be found, we agree to differ. Still, that vast and opaque body of persons who pique themselves on their "common-sense," and especially on their Protestantism (right of protesting), greatly resent what they call "extreme opinions ;" that is, opinions of any kind which project beyond either and of

their intellectual foot-rule. They are probably unaware that in all ages the most intelligent persons among all communities have entertained opinions beyond the average standard of measurement, at both ends ; but if they knew it, it would make no difference ; there is a complacency about them which leaves nothing to be desired on the score of self-contentment, only unhappily it is so easily ruffled. They resent equally Messrs. Carlyle-and-Congreve's Intelligent Despotism, my Lord Salisbury's Aristocratic Supremacy, Mr. Mill's Economical Panaceas, Mr. Bright's Democratic Remedies, and Mr. Ruskin's Sentimental Theories ; whereas, all that they have a right to do, when seated at the genial board, is to disagree with them. Resentment ought to have no place at a gentleman's dinner-table ; and no opinion should be so expressed as to provoke it.

But the entertainment and expression of free opinion is the very life-blood of intellectual existence. Even when men's views are clothed in too forcible and extravagant language (always provided that no personal offence is intended),

the true Man of the World regards them with charitable eyes, and makes a due allowance. When the poor's-rate so increases in a gentleman's parish as to cause him, for instance, to state his conviction that nothing but the direst experience will check the improvidence of the poor; that he really thinks (albeit there is no stauncher friend to Christianity, as by law established, than himself, even down to that branch of it called the Irish Church) it would be better, on the whole, that people should be left to starve to death in the streets, for a generation or two, the Man of the World resists the temptation of telling him that he is a disgrace to his species, because he is well aware that the truculent speaker has no more intention of speaking literally, than had the fopling of Wycherley's time when he adjured society to "stap his vitals."

The ability to place one's self in the position of others is a rare gift; if it were otherwise, the world would be a more agreeable one; we should then have neither Amalgamated Masters nor Trades' Unions, and the Clergyman and the

Sinner would understand one another much better than they do ; but he who has mixed with varieties of men has had his eyes opened to at least this important fact, that a fellow-creature may entertain opinions that are antagonistic to his own, and may even express them with some warmth, and yet not be a wholly unmitigated scoundrel after all. "Human life," observes a certain philosopher, at the close, as it would seem, of a long experience of muscular and sensuous pleasure, "is not *all* Beer and Skittles;" nor is it all Ritualism and Early Rising ; nor all Prudence and Accumulation of Capital ; nor all Swell-dom and Inanity ; nor all Jobbing and Place ; nor all Hard Work and its Reward. But it is something made up of all these things, and of a million of others. "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of eternity," complains the most poetic of poets ; but the Man of the World makes no complaint, but adapts himself to the various hues as best he can. He has his own glasses, of course (not by any means rose-coloured ones), through which he gazes, if not, alas ! upon "the white radiance

of eternity," at all events, upon the world without, but he is not so unreasonable as to be angry, if it seems to others of a different hue. Nay, he likes a man to have his own opinion; since, in these days of cliques, and coteries, and personal followings—when, even in religious belief, it is so common to hear men say: "Well, I don't go so far as So-and-so, or So-and-so"—it is as refreshing as mountain-air to find one's neighbour at the dinner-table to be one who takes the trouble to think for himself.

If any further argument be necessary to show that all opinion in social life has a right to be expressed, and that men should exercise a courteous charity in its reception, I may mention this one: that, as with respect to the human form, it is asserted that in every seven years it suffers so complete a change that nothing of the original belongs to it, thus social opinion, in much less time, so grows and broadens, that no ancient land-mark is anywhere recognisable, while the very places which men marked as extreme limits, and on which they took their

stand, and said: "Up to this point shall the wave of freedom rise, but no further," are, in seven years, "full fathom five" under water.

SICKNESS.

THIS matter of astonishment to the hale man suddenly struck down by illness, how little of human life he has hitherto known. Only, as it were, the front view of it. He now sees, for the first time, what is behind. This is especially the case with the Man of the World. Sickness is not included in his programme. He never calculated upon spending any considerable portion of time *out* of the world, confined to his room or his bed. He did not expect, of course, to be wholly free from physical pain. He has felt toothache, which was no joke, and been obliged to have the condemned thing removed by the dentist (when for the moment it really seemed to him to be the end of the Universe); he has had a touch of neuralgia, perhaps; and something shooting in his great toe, upon one occasion, which was

uncommonly like what he could imagine was a twinge of the gout. But he has experienced nothing of serious illness, although (which is very different) he has seen something of it in others. There was that case of "poor Kit Reynolds of the Greys—paralysis of the spine, sir; most infernal thing—no rest, no motion, no anything—almost more than any fellow deserves," as it seemed; one looked in upon poor Kit while that was going on, but not often nor for long. One's engagements—"had to try a horse down Pimlico-way," or "promised to join some fellows at Lord's"—had never permitted of that. Everything was done for Kit that could be done, you understand: and there was really no *use* in our being with him, or we would have stopped any amount of time. And wherever we went after such visits, we had told of what we had seen in that sad sick room, and everybody had agreed that it was "deuced hard lines" on Kit.

But to be personally acquainted with illness—to have it one's self—is quite another thing from this. What a time it seems, as one lies here half in thought, half in dream, since that day

at the club, when we suddenly felt so queer—"You'd been looking precious black under the eyes, my boy, for days," observed one of our friends afterwards, but we had not remarked it ourselves—when the newspaper, which we were reading, suddenly grew dark as though it were *all* print, and old Colonel Blazer cried: "Quick, you fool, and get him a glass of water," to the waiter. That's about all we recollect about it. It must be very long ago; not only because we are worn to a shadow, and when the looking-glass (not very willingly) is brought and placed in our hand, we scarcely recognise the features, but because we have been living another life altogether since, more different from the old one than if we had emigrated to the Antipodes, and become a settler, or (what has always seemed much the same thing to us in Pall Mall) a savage. No politics, no scandal, no good stories nor "good things" have reached our ears; no outdoor sights, nor (to speak of) indoor; no parson in pulpit, no ballet-dancer on the stage; no crowded place of assembly of any sort, no book even, no picture, no everyday object of any

kind, has met our eyes. We have been in a new world altogether. The very bedroom with which we were familiar enough, one would have supposed, wears now quite a new aspect. Everything is altered, but yet not strange. We seem as accustomed to this sort of life as to the old one; and to have passed about an equal time in each. We have been very kindly tended; a strong though indistinct sense of gratitude pervades us; many friends have called (it has been told us), and repeatedly; we have been by no means forgotten by the people that are going about the streets, outside yonder, in the usual fashion, working, or even walking (for that seems a great thing now), and enjoying themselves; but we concern ourselves most with the angel in the house, who has been hovering about us all this while, and ministering unto us. One's wife, perhaps (God bless her!), who has not left us night or day (as we hear afterwards); or, if we are not so fortunate as to possess a wife, some other gracious woman. Men cannot nurse: of course, out in the backwoods, or on board ship, or in a military hospital, they endeavour to do so; but with all their good-will

and tenderness, there is something lacking. The hand that smooths the pillow, the voice that almost soothes the pain, do not belong to the Male. And yet this is the sex that men, when they are well, often ill-treat, and still more often despise. For our own part (and we are no whit worse than our fellows), it seems to us, as we lie here, that we have deserved no such ministration at their hands, but quite another sort of treatment. Why do not they neglect *us*, when we have nothing left about us to admire, as we neglect and desert *them*? By the by, we have had delirium, it seems, and What may we have said, or not have said, about *that* subject? Nothing, let us hope; or, if anything, only what has been put down to a disordered imagination. She has placed our favourite *Saturday Review* close to our pillow, in case—quite a hopeless one—we should find ourselves well enough to read it. We always thought the *Saturday* uncommon hard on women, that we *will* say. Let us hope it won't write down the sex so as to abolish it altogether.

Lemonade? "Thank you." Iced too. They must surely drink iced lemonade in Paradise, and

yet we used to call it Wash. Bless the Yankees (whom we always hated so) for the introduction of Wenham Lake Ice. The idea of putting such a delicious invention as that into sherry! How we do hate wine just now! Who *wants* to smoke and hurt his digestion? The Total Abstiners and the Anti-Tobacco Society have acquired a new Sympathiser.

Sun-blinds! They were a good idea too, whoever hit upon them: how softly comes the summer air beneath them, and how sweetly. Somebody has placed a box of flowers in the open window. Mignonette? Yes, mignonette. How far off seem the street-sounds: they are like the murmur of a distant sea! Moreover, they seem to break short off when they grow near, and change to a sort of muffled rumble. How is that? *Straw*. Ah, she has had straw laid down, as if we were a lady in the—ahem—in an interesting condition. Very pleasant, though, is that precaution. If a butcher-boy suddenly breaks out into a carol as he passes under the window, we break out into what is called “a pug” upon the instant—a profuse perspiration. When the street-door bell rings—they

have tied up the knocker, perhaps with a *lemon-coloured* kid glove, to disabuse the public mind—it tingles all down one's spine. If an organ—— By George, there *is* an organ! How our brain thuds, how our limbs quiver! Will they *never* stop him? Yes; they have stopped him now, and we hope killed him. But oh, the legacy of pain that vile thing leaves behind it! *Thrown back?* Ah, we know what that means now, and how easily the thing is done.

Chicken-broth? Very good. But how odd that one can't feed one's self—that She has to carry the spoon to our mouth, as if one was an infant—no, infants use bottles. “May we never want an infant, nor a bottle to give him.” *Hush.* We must not excite ourselves, it seems, even with the smallest jokes; although the making of them is a good sign. The doctor has forbidden it. What doctor? In our university-days, there was a man who, in pushing the brusqueness of Abernethy to downright brutality, imagined he was imitating his genius. A medical monster. Could it be he? What nonsense! And why has one a tendency to talk nonsense? *Fever.* O yes, of course, we remember

it all now. It was very curious. What faces and forms have we lately seen ! As a general rule, we are unable to recall the likenesses of people to our remembrance ; but we have made up of late for all omissions of that kind. A constant stream of well-known countenances has been visiting us, but not all—to judge by the expression of their features—with the best intentions. Faces of those long dead, as well as of the living—familiar faces, and those which we seem to have seen but once in our lives before, and then when one was but a child. It is now that we learn that “there is no such thing as forgetting ;” that Memory only slumbers—never dies.

The most beautiful and artistic forms have also flitted before us ; and from such an inadequate cause. That paper we were last reading at the club was the *Illustrated London News*, and it contained a picture of some piece of statuary. All the galleries of France and Italy have been introduced to us by that single illustration. Hercules and Apollo ; Fauns and Satyrs in crowds ; not so many Nymphs as one could have wished, but still several ; Shepherds ; and a Chiropodist—no, the

Boy extracting a Thorn. No paintings at all : everything presented has been quite colourless—white. We have only listened to one conversation, but this has been repeated, and never failed to have a personal interest, for the subject has been our own funeral. We were dead, and some of our club friends were discussing the question of interment. Like poor folks, our “club,” it seems, was to bury us ; at all events, these gentlemen were debating about the expense of that operation. “Look here,” said one (and the remark was more characteristic than could have possibly been invented) ; “I’ll subscribe to no fund ; I decline to do that upon principle ; I’ll join with nobody in doing anything ; but if ten shillings will bury him out and out, I’ll give the ten shillings—*there !*” We could see him emphasize his words upon his fingers, just as in real life ; the lifting of his eyebrows ; and the shoving his hands into his pockets (a sign, with him, that they were *closed*). On receiving the not unexpected news that ten shillings would scarcely cover the expenses, he exclaimed, “Ah, then, I don’t give *anything*, mind that.” We laughed at him (in the sleeve of our night-shirt)

just as we were always wont to laugh aloud at his droll humour.

No. 2 was more ostentatious, although, in reality, less friendly. "He shall have a splendid tomb of purest alabaster" [tomb exhibited]—"a sarcophagus, if it costs me a thousand pounds."

To him No. 1, in a tone of surprised remonstrance: "You don't mean to say *that*? You are not going to put a sarcophagus of white what-d'-ye-call-it over *him*?"

No. 2 (reflecting): "Eh! No; that wont do, will it? Not *over* him—certainly not *over* him. He must be buried somewhere else, of course. It shall be a Cenotaph."

This conversation was repeated, word for word, about twelve times.

Hark! there is a real—and, indeed, a most material—step coming up the stairs; for he is stout. The doctor comes—smiling, cheerful, but reticent. "Yes, we have had a bad bout," he allows; "but all is going on well now."—What *have* we had?—"Well, just a touch of bilious fever." Just a touch! As a matter of fact (we feel) it was touch and go.

There have been intervals—long ones—of consciousness; what the newspapers call, in the case of maniacs, “lucid” ones. And we remember all about them—which, however, is not much. Was the contemplation of Death terrible? Not at all. Not nearly so sad as the occasional thoughts of it that pass across the minds of even Men of the World in health. Perhaps the sense of weakness, of incapacity, overpowered everything. Indeed that must have been so, since there was not even regret at leaving our dear ones, no passionate yearnings, no remorse. Let us hope *that* is to come, for it is needful.

He did not do much harm, nor yet much good,
And might have been much better if he would,

might have been written (and even worse) a-top of that alabaster sarcophagus. Heigh-ho! If we even move our hand to our forehead we grow weary. Yet we have every comfort, every aid. How do people manage in the country? Ice difficult to procure—doctor miles away—when one wants things, to have to wait. My God! what do the poor do everywhere. [*Mem.*, to write out

cheque for hospital. Better do it at once.—There ! *that's* done, and pleasant too ; but it tires one.] Fancy, lying thus amid squalor ! no soft pillows ; no cool drinks ; no fresh air ! There are some people who pass their lives in giving these things to those who want them, in seeking out the squalor, in personally aiding these unhappy ones. It is very easy to write a cheque. To think of the poor folks that are *never* well—the Bedridden. How different the world must seem to *them*, and to us at the club. Cripples must surely hop straight to heaven. But *We* ? However, when we get better, we shall doubtless lose all these unpleasant reflections.

We do get better ; but it is a long process. We begin to feel impatient [“Good sign,” says the doctor], and to kick against the filthy medicines that we formerly took, our dear nurse says, “like a lamb.” The idea of a lamb taking two pills at night, something black and detestable in the morning, and something else three times a day in water ! Bah !

How we love the sun ! We do not wonder any more at the Parsee religion, but only at their hats. [Tall, you know, and with a hole for the rain to

accumulate.] We see a great deal of him, for we often wake at daybreak ["Not a bad sign," says the doctor : nothing *is* bad now, it seems] ; sometimes we feebly drag ourselves to the window, and look out. Then the World seems quite different to what it used to at the same hour when we were coming home late from some sort of dissipation. Unspeakably fresh and cool, and, above all things, New. Each seems the first day that ever was made : the first day for any one of us to begin a new life in ; a blank page for us to write in it what we will. So calm and solemn ; and though there may not be a breath of air, yet whispering unspeakable things. However, when we get stronger, we shall doubtless lose these morbid impressions.

We do get stronger : we go *out*—of course, for the first time on wheels ; a mode of progression we have always detested. The being taken round and round in the orbit of the fashionable world in Hyde Park used to seem to us the culmination of genteel idiocy ; but how delightful even *that* is now ! The passing through the air ; the sight of the trees and the grass ; even the fine folks lounging and

lolling, have their charms for us. It is pleasant to lounge, and loll, one's self, when one is weak ; and doubtless that is why *they* do it. How busy the streets are ! " All business has been carried on as usual during the alterations " in *our* premises ; and if those alterations had resulted in a complete change—in a removal to the alabaster sarcophagus—it would have gone on, strange as that seems, exactly the same.

Presently, one begins to toddle out a little on one's own legs. " Glad to see you about again—deuced glad ! " says the gentleman who had refused to subscribe to our burial-fund ; and " Gad ! I was afraid we had lost you," says he who offered the Cenotaph. Wine and tobacco [Excellent sign, says the doctor, who only looks in now once a week or so] become welcome again : and we grow wickoder daily in all sorts of ways. There is a phrase called " Well and good ; " but it's *only* a phrase, we fear, as respects ourselves. There is an old rhyme, on the other hand, that fits us to a hair :

The devil was ill—the devil a saint would be :
The devil got well—the devil a saint was he.

And yet there are some seeds of good left by that sickness ; they ought to be mustard-seeds : but they grow no higher than mustard and cress : still, they do grow. We feel more sympathy for others that are sick ; more grateful for the ordinary, and formerly unnoticed blessings of health. It is unquestionably a beneficial experience—this Sickness—for it increases enjoyment. Still, one does not wish to be ill again : you might as well expect the child to desire the discipline of the rod ; and besides, the next time matters might end worse—namely, in the alabaster sarcophagus—if even they end *there*. The maxim of Men of the World, therefore, who wish to act up to their mundane views, is to keep in health, for protracted illness may undermine their principles ! It is to me a most surprising thing that some folks, even when they are ill, continue to be so desperately vicious. I protest that for three whole weeks, through which I once lay insensible, and for more than a month afterwards, when I was thoroughly prostrated through weakness, my behaviour was in every respect without reproach. Spiritual pride is not in my nature ; but I will lay a wager that no other

Man of the World who has *not* been ill, is able to refer to seven weeks of irreproachable conduct : the loser to take a wineglassful of cold-drawn castor-oil. Ugh !

MIDWAY THOUGHTS.

THERE have been men of whom it is said that they have never grown old: green Patriarchs, who refuse allegiance to advancing Time to the very last. Even these must have looked back on palmier days, and acknowledged to themselves that, although not old, they had once been younger; but to most men there sooner or later comes an hour when they are secretly obliged to confess that *their* period of middle life at least has been overpassed; that they have arrived at that highest point which divides the journey of every one of us into two unequal portions, the larger of which most commonly is behind us. Yonder it lies, winding among the checkered fields, with a hundred well-remembered resting-places, where we took our pleasure, without enjoying it surely as we ought to have done; so it seems, as we here

stand on unreturning feet ; we knew, indeed, from report that some such hour as this was upon its inexorable way, but we had not realized it ; and now we revisit those places nevermore. Here and there, indeed, there were dark spots, gloomy enough in contrast with the sunshine from which we entered them, and into which we emerged after a very little time, but from hence they are scarcely visible. Even where a friend and fellow-traveller fell down and perished, so strangely (as it seemed) before his time, the rest of the gay company with whom we journeyed soon closed up about us, and we forgot his loss ; *now* we perceive the void ; as it was with him, so shall it be with us ; we pitied him then ; but was it not better for him to have been spared this hour, and the contemplation of that down-hill road, all hid, as if in marsh vapour, as yet, which we must presently follow with unelastic tread ? How we regret the time misspent in his loved company ; when we meet again, will any of those bonds which we once thought so strong, be found to have survived the shock of Death and the Mysterious Change ? How much of that we had in common, we wonder,

was eternal? Can it be that that companion of so many years was with us so long for nothing?—that the “dear Jack,” the “old fellow,” the—— It is impossible to pursue such a reflection, since a thousand scenes in which he played his part with us crowd in upon our memory suddenly, and the unbidden tears start to our outward eyes. Ah, sad and strange! We never cared for him so much as at this hour, when for the first time we seriously reflect that he is not dead to us, but rather we to him. We shall be dear friends yet, perhaps, although in a different fashion.

Let us look again. The beginning of that road we have come is in a summer haze; its colours are bright, but vague; if we were happy in our boyhood, we scarcely knew that we were. Some have averred that epoch to be the height of happiness; but it is not so. The happiest period of human life is that in which, without thought of any end to the pleasure, we are yet conscious that time is passing very swiftly. The wish of the true Epicurean should be to be always adolescent. In boyhood, we are tethered, and do not range at will; our lives are dependent; our pleasures and

sorrows are created for us. But the Youth enfranchised from control, rosy with health, yet who never says to himself "How well I am!" resilient with superabundant vigour; whose thoughts might spring to his lips in song, so glad are they; whose lips are not sufficient for his mirth, but it fills his eyes also; whose feet are not weary at night; whose heart is not heavy in the morning!—ah me! ah me! what a lot is his! If he have a secret, it is a burden which he joyfully carries, and without which, since he has once learned it, he can no longer exist, but henceforward Life and Love are inseparable. By the side too of the passion-flower Love, buds and blows the rose of Friendship. Hitherto, this latter sentiment has been shifty, changeful, and made up of quarrels and reconciliations; it has embraced too many to have had a firm hold of any one. But henceforth there are a chosen few with whose future lives his own is interwoven. Fame, riches, rank, all earthly objects of later ambition are feeble recompenses indeed for the loss of this epoch.

The myrtle and ivy 'twixt sixteen and twenty
Are worth all your laurels, however so plenty.

* * * *


Then away with all such from the head that is hoary,
What cares *it* for the wreaths that can only give Glory !

Our head perhaps is not yet gray, but we are not less past that palmy time. Some men are gray in youth, and the locks of some, on the other hand, Time forgets to silver. We may long deceive our fellow-creatures even yet, but from this hour it is impossible to deceive ourselves. There was a certain monarch who once forbade any man to speak or hint in his presence of another and greater monarch—Death. He had lived an evil life, as most of us, it is too probable, would have likewise lived had we been placed high as he, and as many of us, alas, *have* lived, who have not been placed so high ; and the thought of death was hateful to him. He was an old man, and it was near. We feel a sympathy now for that poor crowned wretch which we never felt before. Would it not be well if all men should agree that there was no such thing as Age !

There have been often men who have resolved

to be young for ever, or at least to act as though they were. One of the most striking examples of such a course is found in Shakspeare's Falstaff. He has depicted the ancient rake still clinging with joyless persistence to his former pleasures; despised, notwithstanding his wondrous wit, by the very companions of his riot; and pricked every now and then, through his bull's hide of a conscience, by hideous apprehensions of the Future. He sometimes jests at it, but oftener makes sudden resolutions of repentance, lasting perhaps no longer than the words in which they are expressed, but indicative enough of the thoughts that are habitually harassing him. At last he dies, and what a scene is that, even described to us by such a witness as Dame Quickly.* How infinitely more terrible than any that has been portrayed for the mere

* "So 'a cried out, God, God, God! three or four times. Now I, *to comfort him*, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So, 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet. I put my hand into the bed, and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and so upward and upward, and all was as cold as any stone."



purpose of terrifying ! How far truer than most genuine narratives of dissolution ! The grim pencil of Fuseli has fitly illustrated this : cold and stark the dead man lies, with the large hands crooked with which he has been "fumbling with the sheets;" while out at the open window we see the new moon shining down upon the eternal seas.

Poor Sir John is not an encouraging example of those miscalled Men of the World, who would fain ignore the noiseless steps of him of the scythe and hour-glass ; nor, indeed, is it easy to find one who is. It is held by even brave men to be a good thing to know when one is beaten ; and it can scarcely be disgraceful to own one's self vanquished by the universal conqueror, Time. Let us strike our flag, then, with a good grace, and not have it hauled down by boarders. The hour has arrived for the recognition of the mournful fact, that Youth and we have parted company.

Ah Youth, for years full many and sweet,
'Tis known that thou and I were one ;
I'll deem it but a fond deceit,
I cannot think that thou art gone.

Thy vesper bell hath not yet toll'd,
And thou wert aye a masker bold !
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To *make believe* that thou art gone ?

* * * *

Life is but Thought ; so think I will
That youth and I are housemates still.

So sang one of the sweetest of our human singers, gifted with a mind that indeed seemed incapable of senility, yet even he found the struggle utterly hopeless. He stood as we, and as all that come after us shall stand, upon this self-same hill, and turned his eyes more regretfully than most upon that sunny portion of the road already travelled ; for beside the joys which surround us all at that happy epoch, a mighty happiness was conferred upon him in addition—the faculty divine of song. Whatever comes of this in the end, wrote one who himself sang and suffered, “we poets in our youth begin in gladness.” There is no delight so absorbing and so glorious as that which they experience ; the possession of the gift in question is said to comfort them even in old age, but while they are young, it intoxicates them with its raptures.

Verses a breeze 'mid blossoms playing,
Where hope clung feeding like a bee,
Both were mine; life went a-Maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poetry,

When I was young.

Ah, woful When!

Alas the change 'twixt Now and Then!

Bitter as may be our own reflections, they are not so sad, we may be sure, as his who wrote those lines. Whatever we have lost, he had lost more; whatever tenderest memories arise within us of the bygone hours, he had experienced them, and more; and however brilliant seems that part of the way we have travelled to ourselves, to him it was bathed in tenfold splendours.

When we have journeyed further, it is probable enough that the very position which we now occupy will in its turn appear fair and enviable, but it never can compete with the epoch of Adolescence; between that and it there is even now a great space, with halting places upon it, the memory of which is very dear. Yonder is the place, perhaps, where from thenceforward we walked no longer unaccompanied; our sorrows were no more our own, but shared (and lightened by far more than one half)

by a loving wife. Further on, a child was born; and thence commenced that domestic life which possesses a charm that never fades, a sober happiness which increases with those very years that destroy all other earthly pleasures. It abides with us, as faithful as friendship itself—alas for him who knows it not, woe to him that despises it—down to the very verge of the grave. We are well aware that we are in possession of this treasure, that we live and move in this mellow light of domestic love, and that, were it withdrawn, our darkness would be darkness indeed; we are thankful for it to the Giver of all good; nay, we will even admit that this sort of happiness is that which, as respects this world, is most to be coveted, as being at once the most virtuous and the most lasting.

And yet, and yet, as we gaze on that portion of the bygone way where it has left the fenced fields of boyhood, but has not entered the broad highway where men begin to jostle for precedence, how far and fair it looks. It is not distance which lends it enchantment; it was *in truth* most fair, and if that glorious tract seems somewhat obscure, the mist is in our own eyes. Care trod it not in

our company, nor illness, nor did we heed the decreasing purse. Even the wisest and most prudent of men gives utterance to a burst of enthusiasm concerning this blessed season of Youth, in the midst of his gravest precepts: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." He is only careful to add that he intends by this no licence for sin. Not all his maturest wisdom could make up to him for that last epoch; the wiser we are, oftentimes the sadder we are, the fuller of suspicions and forebodings. Youth believes and hopes. King Solomon demanded not long life, nor riches, nor the lives of his enemies, but chose what was far better—an understanding heart. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that he made his choice in youth. He had not reached the midway halting-place betwixt the cradle and that stone, on which, alas! it might so often be written, Rest and be Thankful. Otherwise, notwithstanding that all kings of the earth had sent to consult his judgment, and the Queen of Sheba herself had come in person to commune with him,

and though he had spoken three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five, is it not possible that, if the offer had again been made to him of "Ask, and it shall be given thee," he would gladly have exchanged his seven hundred wives and his three hundred concubines for that daughter of Pharaoh whom he had loved in his youth, and the days of his greatness and his wickedness for those wherein he was called Jedediah, and his young companions loved him for his own sake? The good king Hezekiah, who lived long after him, being sick unto death, while yet (for those days) in his youth, besought that he might not be cut off so soon, and it was granted to him. We do not read that he profited by those fifteen added years, and perhaps his shortcoming was written for our learning. Let us be content with what we have, and thankful for what we have had. Friends upon the half-way hill, let us journey on together unrepining; it is vain for us to attempt to mingle with yon happy crowd whose place is so far behind us. We cannot even wait here for them, but must on. The road, perhaps, will not be so rough as we apprehend; some

whom we love are still with us. The evil days are come not yet, nor the years drawn nigh wherein we need say there is no pleasure in them. For a long way still on our descent we shall see the sun. Besides, somewhere upon that hidden track there is a halting-place for every one of us, although we know not where it shall be ; it may be on to-morrow's journey. There we fall asleep ; and afterwards—it is said—if we have walked aright, shall awaken in a place where there is no more change to be regretted, and tears shall be wiped away from all eyes.

The most experienced Man of the World has less knowledge of this matter than the child who died yesterday, and it therefore behoves us to be silent. It is even possible on the other side of the gate called Death that good Manners and good Sense, (or what we take for such,) are valueless. And yet he was reckoned a wise man, who, when taunted on the score of his great abilities with, " God does not need your wisdom," replied, " Yet surely, friend, far less does he require your folly." Ill-manners and Bad Taste can scarcely be letters of introduction anywhere.

ON SOME SAVAGE CUSTOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

ESPECIALLY THAT OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING.

THE miseries of human life, says the philosopher, are few indeed which Laws can cause or cure ; but he does not venture to include Custom. The necessity of doing the usual thing—that is, of following the precedents laid down by the great mass of society, who unhappily are neither wise nor witty—adds very much to those evils to which flesh is heir. The dull man makes a great point of fully attiring himself in black broad-cloth, in order to dine with fourteen other dull men upon a mid-summer night ; the sixteenth man, whom (taking a generous average) we will suppose to be a sensible person, has to do the like. It takes a man of genius resolutely to refuse to put himself to this inconvenience, even where only men are concerned. If there are ladies in the case, he regrets the

circumstance, but of course attires himself accordingly.

In the very hottest noontide of July, there is not a gentleman in England who dare walk down Regent Street in the wide-awake, or other head-covering adapted to the state of the thermometer, which he wears everywhere else except in London.

Nobody who dines, as a guest, in Belgrave Square, ventures to ask one of those ridiculous footmen—with the flour in their hair (though not, of course, a camellia, as is the case with his lovely and accomplished neighbour)—for a glass of table-beer, although he may prefer it to all the vintages of France and Spain.

There is more than one club in Pall Mall where it is held indecorous to bring a pipe into the smoking-room, the society (of whom five-sixths are pipe-smokers) being so “very genteel.”

If my uncle dies at St. Petersburg, I am obliged to impart the sad intelligence to the population of the metropolis by pulling down my dining-room blinds in Baker Street, a chamber which is not well lighted at the best of times. If he had died of sunstroke at Hong-kong, one can imagine friends

being requested to accept the information in that form; but since it was otherwise, why should I light my gas two hours earlier than usual? It is surely not a subject for an illumination.

It is not supposed, I believe, even by Mr. Darwin, that man originally walked backwards, and only from long practice eventually attained to his present mode of progression. Why then in the presence of royalty, do we perform the stupid and dangerous evolution of "backing" out of the room? It is surely a poor compliment to Majesty to credit it with such little sense as to be pleased with so awkward a manœuvre. How wonderful that folks who do such things every day—and at night with lighted candles in their hands—could not keep their countenances when the Siamese ambassadors approached the steps of the throne upon all fours! Such a proceeding was surely far more fitting, since the apparent object of both sorts of courtiers is to degrade themselves to the level of the beasts.

How blind, however, we *can* be to our own absurdities, while intolerant of those of our neighbours, was never more clearly shown than on a late occasion, when a learned—and what is much better,

a generally sensible—judge, found fault with a Quaker for keeping his head covered in court. Conceive a gentleman in a horse-hair wig eighteen inches long, and a red gown that has to be held up for him if he would walk, finding fault with a man's *hat*! How a judge is dressed, however, is a matter entirely between himself and the criminal classes, and I believe their chief objection to him is his wearing an article of apparel which is certainly not often seen within doors—namely, a Black Cap.

For my part, I have only to ask why ordinary gentlemen *will* come into my drawing-room with a crush-hat tucked under their arms? If they are afraid of it being stolen if left below stairs, why do they not bring up their great-coats also? Are *Gibuses* so very rare that they are thus offered to the inspection of the ladies of my family, like a Jack-in-the-Box; or is it that these persons are unable to join in polite conversation without having something to “fiddle” with? Suppose I was to bring up my umbrella, and amuse myself by opening and shutting *that*!


But the greatest nuisance I have to complain of

with which society has saddled us, without the least necessity, is the custom of after-dinner speeches. In the case of ministers and public characters who are asked to dinner by committees, it is all very well ; they are (in one way or another) paid to speak, and the people who meet them like to hear them. It is a strange taste to wish to receive information so immediately after food, but I am of a catholic temper, and have not the least objection to the mistakes of my fellow-creatures so long as they do not affect myself. But unfortunately this matter *does* affect me.

When more than eighteen people (of the male sex) dine together (for to do society justice, nobody is now permitted to propose a toast at a private party), there is always a chance of somebody rising "with permission of the chair," and making me uncomfortable. Now, why does he do that? Is he aware, that with the exception of Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Dickens, there are not half-a-dozen men in England who can say anything *extempore* worth hearing; or does he suppose that he is one of those six? Do I, or anybody present (although we may madly rap the table

with the handles of our dessert-knives), care three farthings for what he thinks upon the subject he has chosen to dilate upon, even at his best ; or does he imagine that, gorged with food and drink, he is in a better condition than usual for expressing these common-place ideas of his ! If he really believes what he says—namely, that he “ feels it his *duty* to get up and say a few words, &c.”—he deserves immediate consignment to a lunatic asylum, and a strait waistcoat to keep him quiet in the cab. But the fact is, he is lying, and he knows it. While he talks about his want of eloquence (when we all cry “ No, no,”) he in his heart believes himself to be a Kossuth in that respect. He is a foolish, vain, impertinent false man. Why is the pleasant conversation of my next neighbour (who has read my works, I find, and likes them) to be totally interrupted, and silence to be proclaimed for this ridiculous coxcomb, who happens to have the gift of talking on his hind-legs ! I protest against it in the name of those down-trodden myriads who are forced to cry “ Hear, hear ” with their lips, while their minds are full of bitterness and contempt. Who wants to hear what he has to say about the

Queen and the Royal Family, and the Memory of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort! Who cares whether he approves or not of the institutions of the Army and Navy! who feels the slightest interest in the fact that this fellow can lay his hand upon his heart while he patronizes the Church of England; or what member of that establishment would not on the whole, be rather pleased than not to find that such a stick was a Dissenter! Why these eulogies upon the House of Peers, for instance, as though they had departed from us that afternoon, and were never more to be heard of, save upon this momentous occasion!—which is unhappily far from being the case. It is my belief that if there were no after-dinner speeches, the Conservative party would find themselves great gainers; it is impossible to listen long without feeling some disgust at the innocent objects of such misplaced panegyrics. Why should not “Vaccination, and may it take,” be proposed with as much reason as “the Bench of Bishops!” For my own part, I admire both institutions, but I don’t want to hear Mr. Anybody’s views upon them immediately after dinner. Do let us stop it, do.



Let some public testimonial be subscribed for at once, and presented to that Peruvian envoy, who, at a dinner at the Mansion House in December last, returned thanks for the Foreign Ambassadors in these remarkable words : " God save the Queen." It was mentioned by way of apology, that that was the only sentence in the English tongue with which his Excellency was acquainted. But surely there was no necessity for any such excuse. Was not his observation pregnant with piety, with loyalty, and with brevity, which is the soul of wit? Was it not secure of the adhesion of those present? Did it not carefully steer clear of all things that could compromise or embarrass his government at home? Finally, was it not infinitely preferable to the most ornate and studied oration which should attempt to describe those outlandish parts from which he hailed, on the situation of which in the map not a F.R.G.S. present could probably have set his finger; and about " the reciprocal feelings of amity " entertained by whose inhabitants, the Lord Mayor and his guests must have taken an exceptional quantity of liquor if they believed one word.

Again, should not something be done to rescue

from oblivion the name of that Australian landed proprietor who resolutely refused to open his lips at a public dinner given in his honour at the capital, and designed as a tribute to Endeavour and Perseverance, as exemplified in his own rise from a very humble rank.

"Gentlemen," said he, "what you have said is doubtless true and certainly agreeable, but I never made but one speech in my life before any large number of people, and short as it was, the result was so unfortunate, that I made up my mind never to make another." Upon cross-examination, it turned out that he alluded to his own trial at the Old Bailey about half a century ago, and that the speech he had made was, "Not guilty, my Lord;" in spite of which he had been transported for life.

Unhappily, it is not everybody who has the moral courage to decline to make an exhibition of himself, just because his health is proposed, or because he finds himself suddenly made spokesman, by some pestilent fellow, to return thanks for somebody else. Suppose, while the folks were assembling before dinner, some guest had been requested to utter a few remarks about nothing particular at

the top of his voice, is it likely he would have done it? Would he not have replied with asperity, "Sir, I have nothing to say upon the subject you mention, and certainly nothing worth the attention of this large and respectable company." And is it to be imagined that this poor fellow is in a more intelligent condition *after* dinner than before? Wine may give a man audacity, but it has been justly remarked that it is the enemy which he puts into his mouth to steal away his brains.

The classes of people to whom the savage custom of after-dinner speaking is due are two—first the Proposers of Healths, who are, of course, the origin of the evil, and deserve the greatest obloquy; and secondly, the Returners of Thanks, who, as "accessories after the fact," are almost as culpable, and without whose connivance the nuisance could not exist. The former have naturally, or think they have, what is vulgarly called the Gift of the Gab, and seize upon every opportunity to exhibit it. The professional after-dinner speaker—the fellow who never misses a chance of "asking the permission of his friend in the chair, &c."—feels the same sort of craving, I fancy, as the drunkard for spirits, and


exhibits the like hideous relish for his pleasure: he moistens his lips before commencing, loosens his cravat, pushes his chair well back, and gives a short, sharp bow, which one wishes would crick his neck. As there is no reason which *we* can see why he should have got upon his legs, so there is none that *he* can see why he should sit down. Words, unfortunately, do not fail him (although he often tells us they do), and what, I daresay, he calls his thoughts, are the merest platitudes and commonplaces.

You may know how dull he is by the fact, that if he happens to deliver himself of the smallest joking, which in his ordinary conversation we should pass over in silence, and the charitable hope that such a thing would not occur again, it is received with the most uproarious applause. It is such a relief to laugh, to rap the table (since we cannot hit *him*), to do anything, in short, instead of listening to his hackneyed tropes, which fall like the ceaseless "drip, drip, drip" of water (so popular with the Holy Inquisition) upon the tortured brain. When Boanerges has done, too, we, of course, break out into an ecstasy, the cause of which his vanity causes him to utterly misconstrue. Our mock

applause, in fact, is the garbage on which he feeds ; it strengthens all that is capable of strength within him—that is, it gives him wind and words—and no sooner has it subsided, than he gets up again, smirking and smiling, to inform us that he has made a sad omission in not proposing a toast (here his voice sinks to what he believes is Pathos, but it ought to be spelt with a B)—“ a toast which he is sure that every one here present, whatever opinions he may hold, and whatever convictions he may entertain, will drink with the utmost pleasure and enthusiasm ; a toast such as will evoke not only cheers from the lip, but the best wishes of our human hearts, &c. He will, however, detain us no longer ; but without further preface ” [after this comes a long one], “ he will beg to propose—he dares say we have all anticipated him ” [so we have ; some of us think it’s “ the Queen,” others the “ New Reform Bill ;” nobody is right]—“ he only need mention the name of our estimable friend here present, Mr. John Smith.”

Nine of this man’s hearers out of every ten earnestly wish that he spoke nothing but Peruvian ; but John Smith himself is almost moved to hurl a

decanter at him. He, poor fellow, belongs to the No. 2 class of after-dinner speakers, and has no gift of the gab whatever. It is just as cruel and cowardly to compel that worthy and inoffensive person to speak in public, as it would be to ask a blind man what he thinks of the rainbow. Boanerges knows this very well; the forthcoming exhibition will afford the better foil to his own oratorical performance. There is a long and painful pause. The real fact is, that Smith, being a sensible person, is searching for an idea that may be worth the attention of the company; or having found, is clothing it with any scanty garment of words that he can lay his hand on. A violent rapping of the table, intended to encourage him, puts ideas and words alike to flight; but he rises in obedience to the call, and stammers and staggers through a few involutions and repetitions, until he judges that his tormentors must be satisfied, when he sits down sorry to have made such a fool of himself. To all persons of sensitive and kindly natures, he has afforded unmixed pain; to others, amusement; and to Boanerges, triumph. If it is really essential that Mr. John Smith's health (or



anybody's) should be proposed at all, let the victim have due notice ; almost every man can compose, in the quiet of his chamber, a few fitting remarks, and learn them by heart ; repeating them to himself, if he pleases, with appropriate action, in the silent watches of the night, or at other periods when removed from the public eye. He will thus be, doubtless, made rather uncomfortable for a few days, and will certainly not enjoy the dinner after which the honour in question is to be conferred upon him (if you sit next to him, you will hear a low recitative between the courses, which is the rehearsal of the coming speech) : but at all events, he will not lose his self-respect, or give an opportunity for malignant joy to Boanerges.

When, however, any worthy gentleman may not happen to have received this warning, and finds himself called upon to "return thanks" upon a sudden, without the *de quoi*, I beg to recommend the following brief formula, first heard from the lips of a certain mathematician of my acquaintance, any one of whose thoughts would supply Boanerges with ideas for life, but whose words are not winged.

"Gentlemen," said he, when his health was proposed at his own fellowship dinner, "a morbid desire for originality prevents me from saying that *This is the proudest moment of my life*; and it does not occur to me to say anything else."

If this reply was generally adopted, I think the savage custom of after-dinner speaking at social meetings would be a good deal checked: let me recommend Mr. Smith to try it.


For the gratification of my readers, I may add that this about-to-be benefactor of his species is on the high road—for nobody has to make "a charge" *extempore*—to be a Bishop; and in my opinion, he deserves nothing less than one day to write himself "Cantuar."

TO PERSONS ABOUT TO FIND THEMSELVES FAMOUS.

ONCE upon a time, there was no such profession as Literature ; a Golden Age, when not only no books were printed—not even “trajective” Primers—but no manuscripts were written. Again there was a later time, the Silver Age of soft-speaking dedications to grandees, when men of letters were almost as distinguishable a body as men of war ; when no other calling encroached upon theirs, nor did they (with few exceptions) pay to literature a divided allegiance. And now, behold, matters are so changed, that out of every ten educated persons there is at least one who secretly nourishes the design of appearing in print ; besides a very considerable percentage of the *uneducated*. This estimate is by no means a high one, and will certainly not be gainsayed by

those few persons—namely, Editors—who alone are in a position to judge. The present writer is an editor of long standing; has been a contributor to everything under the sun (although not *to* “the *Sun*,”) and knows very well what he is talking about. Therefore it behoves those concerned in the matter to listen.

This last epoch, or Brazen Age, wherein so vast a multitude think themselves qualified to write, was without doubt brought about by the intervention of periodical literature. At the beginning of the present century there was scarcely any such thing; and such monthly publications as there were, employed but a few pens at a low price. Nay, in the early days of our serials, contributors were often not remunerated at all; “the circumstances of our new venture being at present such as must preclude any pecuniary recompense.” Such was the delicate rejoinder in at least one instance (as I have good reason for knowing) to an author’s demand for payment. The proprietor dispensed praise, but no pudding. Articles were “communicated”—a suspicious phrase, that even now smacks of the Gratuitous—and editors (as



a rule) were much more civil to their correspondents than they now trouble themselves to be. On the other hand, to appear in print was something to talk about in those days, and contributors of a certain sort were well satisfied. Nevertheless, the well-known proverb respecting the small value of things one gets for nothing, was very applicable to those "communicated" articles, the majority of which would now-a-days find great difficulty in being accepted by any moderately good periodical, even at their own modest price, namely 0. The few good original articles were paid for (although at a cheap rate), or were written by men of letters who had an interest in the publication: the rest of the magazine—the "padding," as it is now called—was made up of extracts from books or newspapers.

As magazines and periodicals of all sorts increased, competition began to show its usual symptoms. Those which did not keep on a level with the front rank, got all the dust of the better stepping—that is to say, their rejected articles. Many dropped so far behind, that one by one they were lost to sight altogether; one fine

morning—which happened to be its day of publication—each, sooner or later, omitted to appear on the literary horizon at all. Generally speaking, they deserved to die ; for the cause of decease could commonly be traced either to bad editorship, or to parsimony in their pecuniary management ; but some, victims to sudden veerings of the *aura popularis*, and unable to put their helms about in time, lost way in a really pitiable manner, and are even now neither unremembered nor unregretted. In the meantime, the little body of literary militia which had once been sufficient to perform magazine duty, swelled to a great standing army. (*I am speaking solely of the contributors to literary periodicals.* Newspaper writers and critics form a cohort of their own ; although it is true that many of them take service with the other troops.) Each publication got to have its own staff : persons, that is, whose special qualifications were known to the editor, in whose hands he placed particular subjects for manipulation, and upon whose trustworthiness he could (or flattered himself he could) rely. The Brazen Age had not come even yet. Literature was still a profession, although it had vastly

increased, since it included the periodical writers as well as the authors; at that time, two distinct classes. But presently began the Great Literary Volunteer Movement, compared to which the little exhibitions at Brighton or Wimbledon sink into numerical insignificance. Everybody who could read had already begun to take in the magazines; everybody who could spell (and some who couldn't) now began to write for them. The contagious disorder called *cacoëthes scribendi* broke out in Great Britain (and even Ireland), and spared neither sex nor age. It overran the whole United Kingdom with unexampled rapidity; and it is foolish to imagine that it will ever leave it. We cannot "stamp it out," like the cattle disease, by Rejection; nor can it even be mitigated by inoculation—that is to say, by Good Advice. It only remains for us to deal with it as an admitted fact, and make the best of it.

This desire for appearing in print, besides being as natural to some persons as hunger and thirst, is far from being without its redeeming points. It may be, and often is, the offspring of the merest vanity. The examples of it (as we "*We's*" well know)

are often mean and vulgar to a sad degree: it sometimes owes its existence to no higher motive than that which prompts Jones to carve his uninteresting name (and even address) upon the bark of a tree or the wall of a summer-house. He likes to see it there, and (especially) that other people should see it there. But there are many who really find themselves prompted to express their thoughts, and some of these thoughts are found by the patient editor to be, with some assistance from his winnowing-machine, very well worth printing. It is true that some magazines will even now admit no volunteer contributors at all, entirely relying upon their staff; but this—although it spares the editor a world of trouble—is, in my humble judgment, a mistake. The staff could not have been born in that position, any more than an *aide-de-camp* is born with a cocked-hat and spurs, but must have served some sort of apprenticeship themselves; and again, the exclusive employment of the same writers—however excellent—gives, in time, a monotonous character to a publication. However small the percentage of “accepted” among our volunteer contributors, it is worth having;

and however great the trouble of sifting the chaff from the few grains of wheat, it should, I think, be undertaken, for the grains are sometimes really fine, and may produce whole harvests. However, the following words of advice are not addressed to editors, but to their contributors, and especially to that very much more numerous class, their *would-be* contributors.

What an army it is to whom I speak! I was talking to an editor of a periodical of the cheaper class on this subject, and he told me that the average of rejected prose contributions he received *per week* was twenty-five (the verse was not only numerous but innumerable); about five of these unsuccessful writers—not more—tried their luck with him again, either of their own free will, or encouraged by him to do so; so that this one serial numbered one thousand rejected contributors *per annum*! Some of these unfortunate persons had without doubt been knocking at other doors in vain before, or went from his office elsewhere; going about from magazine to magazine, seeking admittance and finding none, to the end of their days. But the vast majority were probably satis-

fied with that round with their first editor, and once floored, threw up the sponge. There are at least twenty respectable literary periodicals in London alone—I am speaking much within the mark—and each of them, I suppose, has its greater or less tale of victims of this sort. Imagine, therefore, the sum-total—the holocaust offered up at the shrine of periodical literature by those high-priests the We's! It is not only to this unhappy multitude that I propose to address a few words of advice (and mayhap comfort), but to those more fortunate few who have obtained some footing on this or that literary chariot, and hope to find it firmer. It is very unpleasant hanging on behind like a footman, with the spikes of possible rejection close to one's calves. I do not, of course, propose to supply intelligence to those who are without that absolutely indispensable qualification for a writer; I can put no weapons into the hands of the volunteer; but if his regulation rifle is furnished with the proper ammunition—that is, if he has wits as well as a pen—I can show him how to use it, and tell him why it is he so often misses fire.

Mr. Lewes has lately given to us (in the *Fortnightly Review*) a very philosophical exposition of "the Principles of Success in Literature," but his essay will scarcely be of much service to the gentlemen and ladies I have in view. His ideas, indeed, are a little too high-flying for most of us. The fact is, that although men of real genius are without doubt called to the profession of letters after a nobler sort of fashion—more instinctively, and of their own proper motion—than men are called to the bar (for instance) or to the practice of physic, yet they are not to be considered as mere spiritual folk, actuated only by sublime motives: they have the like wants and necessities—or, at all events, their wives and children have—in the way of meat, drink, and clothing, as mere material lawyers and surgeons. There is an immense deal of twaddle talked upon this subject; and under the pretence of treating these gentlemen as ethereal beings, there have been several attempts to starve them. A judge on the English bench had once the effrontery to state that no law of copyright should exist, because Fame was a sufficient reward to any person of genius. His lordship was probably

sufficiently self-conscious to know that there was no chance of his losing *his* five thousand pounds a year by ever coming under that category himself. The labourer in the fields of literature is as worthy of his hire as any other labourer; and although Genius can afford to be its own reward in the case of a young gentleman who indites "promising" poems or essays under his father's roof, when he comes to be a full-fledged *littérateur*, with a wife and an increasing family, he may want a little money from his publishers. Moreover, it has been ascertained by experiment that all contributors to literary periodicals are not persons of genius, although most of them have some talent. And in the case of this rank-and-file of the literary army, they take service for pay at least as much as for the glory that belongs to the calling. Thus, far from being virtuously indignant when a contributor tells me he writes for bread, whether for others or himself, I think it the most natural thing in the world, and see nothing disgraceful in the confession. "By all means," says that well-known contributor to the oldest periodical in England, Samuel Johnson, "let us clear our minds of Cant."

Writers to magazines comprehend all classes—all conditions of men and women—from archbishops to convicts, from peeresses to washerwomen. Those examples of extremes I cull from my own personal experience. One archbishop, two convicts, one peeress, and one washerwoman, were among the would-be contributors to the magazine I had the honour to conduct; the contributions of the peeress and of one convict were rejected; those of the others were accepted. There is no profession in which the competitors are so numerous and varied: and the reason is pretty obvious. The outfit for this calling, a goose-quill and a sheet of foolscap (*absit omen*), is very cheap, and easily procured. The desire of seeing one's self in print has become a universal one; and almost everybody has some story of their own, some (to them) interesting reminiscence, or (more rarely) some ideas upon a particular subject, which they believe to be of public utility. Above all, five-sixths of these good folks imagine that they are born poets and poetesses. Volunteer verse is the great trial of the Editorial profession: only about one poetic contribution in fifty being really good. The fiftieth,

the acceptable poem, is, however, very good. Compare the magazine verse of to-day with that of half a century ago, and you will find a vast improvement in this respect. I could select a volume of poems from certain modern periodicals—not from all, for some editors don't know what is poetry and what is not—every one of which shall have the ring of the true metal. The motives, however, beside this supposed inspiration from the Muse, which cause such a large proportion of the human family to become would-be contributors to magazines, are as various as are their positions in the social scale. Those which principally actuate them may be thus stated. First, Vanity, which, it must be confessed, moves the great majority. Secondly, Necessity, or rather a wish to add to a scanty income by doing pleasant work in leisure hours. [At the same time, nobody (not even the archbishop) has any intention—and small blame to them—of working for nothing.] Thirdly, Fitness.

I shall not, I hope, be considered ungallant, when I now add that by far the most numerous section of would-be contributors are ladies. Not

necessarily because they are more vain than men : we must remember that they have generally more spare time, and also less money. Next to the ladies, clergymen are the most numerous class. Then lawyers—briefless barristers, or youthful attorneys, into whose web no flies have as yet been enticed. Fourthly, persons of humble life ; artisans, *not* small trades-people. Fifthly, naval and military men, and doctors. Sixthly, the aristocracy. And lastly, the criminal classes.

Having thus classed my audience, I purpose next to tell them why it is they fail in the object they seek ; and how, supposing that they really possess the materials for success within them, they may use them to the best advantage.

In the case of most professions which persons propose to themselves to follow, they take some pains to ascertain what it will require of them, or at all events, comply with the initiatory regulations which that calling has laid down. When a man determines on being a barrister, for instance, he is not so foolish as to imagine that he has only to buy a wig at second-hand, and stand at the corner of Chancery Lane in an attitude of expectancy.

There are sureties, and examinations, and dinners, and benchers, and all sorts of animate and inanimate obstacles to be surmounted before he can assume his due position; and he makes himself acquainted with their nature, and overcomes them if he can. But I am sorry to say that those ladies and gentlemen who condescend to favour editors with their lucubrations, often do not think it necessary to pay any attention to the rules—simple as they are—laid down by the periodical to which they aspire to contribute.

A young gentleman, possessed, as he imagines, of a light and pleasant vein of satire, has dashed off in a moment of inspiration an essay, which he decides upon sending to the *Westminster Review*. Setting aside the manifest unsuitability of the matter to the proposed channel—for *that* is a consideration but very rarely entertained—what shall we think of this gentleman's intelligence when we find him addressing his manuscript to the "*Westminster Magazine*?" Nay—what is of more consequence—what must the editor think of it before he breaks the seal of that misdirected document? Can he augur well of the judgment,

the carefulness, or even the trustworthiness of a person who has not even troubled himself to discover the proper address of the serial in whose columns he wishes to appear? Moreover, even an editor is human, and does not like that which he conducts to be miscalled; he resents it as he would resent any one giving him the name of another man. What surpassing ignorance not to know that his periodical is not a magazine, but a *Review*! Thus, to begin with, the young gentleman has not conciliated his editor. If the contents of the manuscript did not happen to be as inappropriate as their address, the author would have already somewhat diminished his chances of success; and I think deservedly.*

Again, most magazines have some simple regulations addressed to contributors, and printed in every number; they are very easy to comply with, and if not complied with, contributors (doubtless unconsciously) cause a world of trouble and some

*This carelessness in the matter of addressing a manuscript is not made more venial by an accompanying note stating that the writer has been a subscriber to "your esteemed periodical" for a quarter of a century.


expense. I allude to "writing upon one side of the page only," "placing their name and address upon the manuscripts themselves," "enclosing stamps for retransmission;" &c. These are little things, but those who neglect them exhibit great folly, and have nobody to blame but themselves if all their labour goes for nothing, and their papers into the waste-basket. It is the troublesome conduct of these foolish persons which caused many magazines to publish a statement that they will not return rejected manuscripts *at all*! We consider this, however, a harsh and unjustifiable step;* for the trouble and expense of returning papers—supposing the above regulations are complied with—are very small in comparison with the loss thus occasioned to the author. Of course, the rejoinder—"We don't *want* his writings; we can do without the one possibly available contributor out of the hundred *incompetents*"—is unanswerable. But it is also rather Brutal, and does not speak well for the refining qualities of editorial pursuits. How-

* In the case of newspapers, this rule is of course not only excusable, but necessary.

ever, we may say in confidence, that the bite of these Unremitting Gentry is not so bad as their bark. They *do* return manuscripts—sent with proper precautions—although, to defend themselves from the incursion of a crowd of foolish folk, they print the terrible words, *Rejected papers cannot be returned*: just as a landed proprietor puts up his notice-board of *Man-traps and Spring-guns* in some beautiful spot he wishes to be sacred from Excursionists, but which, if you respectfully request permission to view, leaving your card in the usual manner, you will be treated with courtesy, even if not actually admitted. It would, however, it must be confessed, be much more honest, as well as dignified, if these magazine notices were made to run thus: “We receive no volunteer contributions at all.” At present, they imply that, though they make use of any possible advantage that the volunteer system may confer, they decline all its responsibilities and duties.

Large as is the class of would-be contributors who exhibit such gross carelessness as I have described, there is another section, almost as large, who err in what may be called the opposite

direction. Instead of not taking pains to make themselves acquainted with the style and nature of the periodical they favour with their attentions, they take a great deal too much pains. They seek out such individuals as may be common friends of the editor (with themselves), or even of the proprietor, and send their manuscripts through their hands, instead of by the usual channel. They could scarcely make a greater mistake; for, taking an extreme case—what they would call “the best” case—namely, that they themselves are the private friends of the editor, and that upon that ground they (more or less) claim to be his contributors, what an invidious position are they placing him in! Their contributions must be either fit for insertion or unfit. If the former, why is it necessary to remind the editor of the private acquaintance which happens to exist between themselves and him? If the latter, they are simply endeavouring to make him act contrary to his conscience, and to the interest of his employers and the public. Mr. Thackeray’s stereotyped reply to such applications, while he conducted the *Cornhill*, was, “My dear sir,” (or madam, as the case might be), “editors



have no friends." Of course, private friends of editors have as much right to contribute to his periodical as any other folk, but they should forward their proposed contributions as others do ; and when rejected, instead of making it a matter of huff and quarrel (as they often do), they ought to be well aware that the fault must lie wholly with themselves, since it is only reasonable to suppose had it been a case of doubt whether or not the article in question should be accepted, friendship would have turned the scale in their favour. What a lesson is read to this class of would-be contributors in the Life of the late Miss Procter, who, though an intimate friend of Mr. Dickens, never sent her charming poems to his periodical in her own name, or written in her own hand, lest she should cause him embarrassment in rejecting them.

It cannot be too emphatically stated, that in the case of any well-conducted magazine, intrinsic merit is the sole thing that causes a paper to be accepted. If it is not well conducted, personal acquaintance may have its weight, of course ; but that magazine is not destined to be long lived.


The reasons which writers put forward for the acceptance of their papers, independent of literary merit, are almost incredible. One writes that he is only just sixteen, and although he is aware he is not fully master of the principles of prose composition, he hopes his youth may be taken into account. A mother forwards a contribution from her offspring, written before he has attained his tenth year. A young lady takes the liberty of enclosing "a fragment recently thrown off by her grandfather [as if he was suffering from ossification], who is actually in his ninetieth year." Now, however interesting these lucubrations may appear to those who are aware of the circumstances under which they are composed, unless they are in themselves meritorious (which they are not), they have necessarily no chance of being accepted. The general public cares nothing about such phenomena, even if it could be persuaded to believe in the statements aforesaid. Similarly, the plea of poverty is totally idle and irrelevant, when it is used for this purpose. A case of genuine distress may be a reason why the editor (if he can afford it) should send his guinea by return of post; but the manu-

script, unless it has something else to recommend it, must be sent back with it; otherwise, the editor has performed an act of charity indeed, but at his proprietor's expense, and perhaps to the serious depreciation of the thing committed to his charge. It is scarcely necessary to add that this plea is not bettered by the fact of it being made on behalf of another person or object than the actual contributor. Clergymen's wives sometimes demand admittance for their lucubrations upon the ground that the chancel of their church is under repair, and money is wanted to pay for it. Quite a number of persons claim to be accepted contributors upon the ground that they have "subscribed" to "your interesting periodical" from its earliest commencement. Warnings against folly of this sort will doubtless be considered superfluous by many who read this paper, but that is only because they are not editors.

Some young gentlemen are good enough to write that they purpose to become contributors, but beg that they may be favoured by return of post with congenial topics to write about. They don't know the style of articles suitable for your

columns. These are extreme cases of stupidity ; but it is extraordinary what little care is taken, even by otherwise sensible writers, to assimilate their productions to the description of articles usually found in the desired channel of publication. I dare say *Punch* receives plenty of theological disquisitions, and the *Mechanics' Magazine* a good many indifferent jokes.

With respect to this choice of subjects, it is, first of all, necessary that a writer should know his own mind ; what style—grave or gay, cynical or didactic, graceful or learned—is more suited to his genius or acquirements, No editor can tell him *that*. If, however, the writer is young, it is probable (unless he writes very dismal poems, chiefly on Memory and the Past) that his style will be lively. Let him beware, then, of taking for genuine humour what is only flippancy, and for wit what is mere “comic writing”—a very different thing. A continued effort to be “smart” is only too perceptible in the early productions of this class of persons. If they have really anything in them, however, this fault soon disappears : and he who can drop all vulgarity, and yet reflect his own high



spirits in his contributions, will not be long among the "rejected." As to literary advice, it cannot be expected that editors should accord it to all who make application; and to give reasons for rejection is, as a general rule, out of the question. The term "unsuitable" must be translated according to the fancy of the writer who has earned it: it would not be good-manners to write "rubbish" outside a rejected paper instead of "with thanks." On the other hand, in my own early days, I have had many a helping-hand in the way of advice and criticism stretched out to me by editors of whom, personally, I knew nothing. Literary men have their jealousies, but they are for the most part a very kindly race. If it were not a breach of confidence, I could name more than one still living editor, who in return for the very considerable trouble I cost them, gave the most patient attention, the most useful suggestions, and above all, wrote words of encouragement such as were the very life-blood of a young writer. They touched my trembling ears with praise that seemed divine. To One, in particular, an author dear to all who speak the English tongue, am I grateful; and not

for my own sake alone. I know from personal experience as his contributor how kind and painstaking he was; how prompt to give the precious pearl of praise; how loth to censure, and graceful and considerate even in *that*. But it was only when I became an editor myself, that I discovered how extensive was the practice of his benevolence. Again and again have young contributors called upon me—very poor folk some of them—and in course of talk they have produced from their breast-pocket, carefully hoarded there, a letter—worn by age, like a holy relic often kissed—the handwriting of which was familiar to me also. “That was a letter he wrote to me himself,” says the poor fellow, flushing with pride, as some private soldier might wear his scarlet in his cheek when he narrates a pleasant word or two spoken to him by his commander-in-chief on some occasion. How well I knew those sensible, kind, hopeful words; and yet the man who wrote them, as he had once done to me, and is now doing to scores of others, could “ill spare the time,” as the world phrases it; and every sentence so written in the cause of human fellowship, and for the love of his

own calling, but yet, as it is called, "for nothing," might have been exchanged for gold. Such an example should shame meaner men into some sense of duty; and I hope it was not altogether thrown away upon myself.

The responsibility of an editor is certainly very considerable; and he should at least remember the days when he was but a contributor himself, and not a faultless one. On the other hand, as I have said, he cannot give advice to every one, although there are cases of literary promise which it is his bounden (moral) duty to encourage. Sometimes, again, though rarely, he is called upon to *discourage*. "I am very poor," writes a humble contributor, evidently without talents; "tell me candidly, from the enclosed specimen of my composition, whether I shall ever make my living by literature, or had I better give it up, and take to some less intellectual but more suitable calling." The truth must then be told. Sometimes, instead of this reply (although so urgently requested) being taken in good part, the recipient, who has only made a pretence of humility, gets exceedingly wroth. Mr. Thackeray once related to me an

editorial experience of this kind, which had occurred to him on his first taking the *Cornhill*. Some young gentleman had forwarded to him, with almost a bushel-basket full of manuscripts, a letter setting forth his social position ; " very small means," " others dependent upon him," &c. The kindly editor spent half a morning in wading through the papers, but found no grain of wheat among the chaff. He accordingly sat down and indited quite a long epistle of the admonitory sort, honestly exhorting his correspondent to give up literature, for which he was manifestly unqualified, and to take up with some less ambitious calling. In return for this, he got the most insolent and vituperative letter it is possible to imagine, hinting very broadly that he, Thackeray, had attained his own position " at the top of the ladder " (I remember that very graceful trope) by luck, or a worse method, and that his (the writer's) fondest hope was one day to see him found out, and at the bottom again. The author of *Vanity Fair* must have smiled very grimly over that composition, which had a great deal more " go " in it than had the rejected papers. Thus, you will observe, the

relative position of editor to contributor is not always that of the Wolf and the Lamb, but sometimes *vice versâ*.

A short private letter (a long one is worse than nothing) may, however, with advantage be forwarded along with a first manuscript; at least, I know it never did *my* contributors any harm. And where the question is asked, Shall I go on writing or not? the answer should not be too decidedly "No," unless, as in the above case, the grounds for it are certain. A first manuscript is almost always full of faults. Perhaps I was somewhat tender-hearted for an editor; but there is too great a disposition, I fancy, on the part of established literary persons, to discourage young beginners, and to warn them off the paths of literature. Walter Scott's saying about the danger of trusting to that profession solely, instead of using it as a walking-stick—a mere assistance—has passed into a proverb, but it has not the significance now that it had in his day. Only a very few even of qualified persons could then hope to gain a subsistence by their pen, whereas it now affords a fair income to hundreds; and yet the remark is thrown at youthful aspirants as much as

ever. It was Lockhart's custom to temporize with young people of this sort. "You must go and fill your basket, sir," used to be his stereotyped reply ; a very wise one, but unsatisfactory enough to one who was desirous to fill his stomach on the instant.

I have said that a private letter can do no harm ; but I do not say the same of a personal visit. The time of editors is much taken up, and whatever requires to be stated can be written far more briefly than it can be spoken. I am not philosopher enough to deny, indeed, that the visit of a lovely young lady may incline one to think twice before telling her that her *Lines to a Faded Lily* (or to anything else) are sad nonsense, but I put in my protest against the system. If the magazine is an illustrated one, and she will sit for a woodcut, that is another matter.

The writing of verse, as a means of subsistence, or even as an auxiliary to it, is absolutely useless. The pay can never be proportional, even in the most prosperous periodical, to the time and thought expended ; and moreover (although the converse does not hold good), all persons who write good poetry can write good prose.

Another almost as unrepaying a branch of literary labour is translation. Scarcely any good periodical publishes translations at all; and those which do, of course pay much less for them than for original matter. It is not, I am sorry to say, unnecessary for me to remark in this place, that for a contributor to send a translation to any magazine without stating that it is a translation, is an act, to say the least of it, very disgraceful. It is this practice, more than direct fraud itself (to be spoken of presently), which causes magazines to be accused of plagiarism. Two translators happen to select the same foreign story, and though each chooses a different title, the coincidence of the march of events is of course very striking. When both have appeared in print, in of course different channels, the subscribers to the magazines in question begin to write letters to their respective editors. "We always understood, sir, that the articles in your periodical were original, but now, &c.;" or, "we beg to call your attention to the fact that, in the *Megatherium* of this month a paper has been published manifestly compiled from one in your February number, with only a turn of expression here and

there a little varied." As for direct fraud, I only allude to it as an example of the completeness of the institution of periodical literature. Crime itself has begun to adapt itself to the system. There are certain scoundrels—absolute Thieves, no less—who make a trade of extracting from the back numbers of periodicals—so far back as to have been forgotten, they hope—such articles as they think likely to be accepted; word for word they copy them, except that they give them a new name, and then send them to some other magazine. If accepted, as is likely enough, they write to say that they are "pressed for money," or are going abroad immediately, and therefore that prepayment, or at least a sum on account, would be very welcome. Months sometimes elapse, in consequence of press of matter, before an article can be published; so their crime remains undiscovered all that time, during which they are probably reaping their harvest elsewhere. So systematized is this practice, that some magazines will publish nothing sent by a stranger without some respectable reference.

Next to translations, articles upon foreign travel

are least likely to find acceptance. Unless they treat of some very out-of-the-way region, or are of really exceptional excellence, they are refused, because the editorial desk has already too many such papers. Everybody goes abroad now-a-days, and almost everybody entertains the delusion that his "Journal," so much admired by private friends, must be very gratifying to the public. Now, even a stiff and guide-book-like account of Timbuctoo might be readable, when an article by the same hand upon Paris or Madrid would only excite a yawn. To write well and strikingly upon what is well known, is given to very few folks indeed. Not only was I myself overwhelmed by these accounts of foreign travel, when I was a We, but I noticed that this class of article, more than any other, had gone through a good deal of home travel. The manuscript often bore marks—such as an editor can never mistake—of having sought for admission at one or two other places previously, and failed. These marks, I would recommend volunteer contributors carefully to erase before re-transmission. Of course, what may not suit one

periodical may very well suit another ; and editors are not always infallible in their judgments. Still it does not prejudice one in your favour to perceive so clearly that other critical persons have declined your obliging offer. The neglect of such an obvious precaution is also by no means an indication of intelligence. These marks often consist in the mere crumpling and soiling of the manuscript ; but there are certain signs and tokens, well known to the Initiated, by which they can identify the very office which has rejected it. [Very amusing it used to be—though rather humiliating to one who entertains lofty views of humanity—to get a contribution thus disfigured, accompanied by a letter, hinting in no vague terms that the paper was compiled with a particular eye to its suitability for “*your* magazine,” and no other.] To cut the corner off that contains these objectionable symbols, is quite useless ; for We know why it has suffered the amputation very well. It is worth while to rewrite the first page. Of course, a really good editor is one who will judge you solely by your merits ; but there are editors and editors.

While speaking of such *minutiæ*, I may add that Legible Writing is a very important element of success. It is too much to expect that an editor should trouble himself to decipher hieroglyphics; and let your pages be accurately numbered and united together, so that they may be easily turned over. The folding of manuscript in a small hard roll is most objectionable, since the paper always remains circular, and difficult to read. With regard to spelling, I have known one man of real genius, though in humble circumstances, who could not spell; and very fortunate, I afterwards thought myself, that I got over my prejudice against his first contribution, which was full of blemishes of this disgraceful sort; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, those who cannot spell cannot write.

It is generally useless for a young hand to attempt reviews. These require, more than almost any other sort of writing, ripe judgment and well-seasoned brains; and moreover, they are usually intrusted to "the staff." There is not much demand—if I may use a commercial term with

respect to a matter that was once supposed to be something very different from any Trade, but which is becoming marvellously like it—for Essays. Their day is gone by. People prefer to think for themselves on this and that subject, and do not desire other men's "views" upon them.

The only line of business, indeed, in connexion with literary periodicals (once more let it be understood that I do not refer to newspapers at all) that can be said to be very remunerative, is the writing of Fiction. Heaven forbid that I should encourage unqualified persons to swell the number of those who already inundate our magazines with stories, often themselves of doubtful merit. But the fact of indifferent narratives being accepted, shows how difficult it is to procure really good ones to meet the increasing demand for this class of composition. Whether for good or ill, whether it is "healthy" or otherwise, the British public are determined to recreate themselves with fiction. Philosophy and religion themselves, when in monthly numbers, cannot pick up a subsistence without it: even the *Fortnightly Review* and *Good Words* must have

their novels. A few respectable old-fashioned persons may "regret the tendency to substitute the meretricious attractions of fiction for, &c. &c.:" but unless they are prepared to make up the pecuniary loss which consulting them would certainly entail upon their favourite magazine, by decrease of circulation, their tastes can no longer be catered for. I must also take leave to say—this being a matter which I claim to know more about than most men—that notwithstanding much depreciatory talk about modern light literature, there is nothing (except, perhaps, poetry) in which our present magazines have shown such marked improvement over the old ones, as in this much-abused novel-writing. Take any—even the best—of the old stagey vamped-up stories of the once famous periodicals, now deceased, and contrast them with the somewhat too "realistic," perhaps, but still life-like sketches in the magazines, let us say, of this current month; and the vast superiority of the latter will at once be made apparent. Some of them, of course, on the other hand, are thin things enough: sans wit, sans taste, sans everything.

That is the reason why I recommend folks to write better ones to supply their place. There is always an opening in every literary periodical for a really good story. All editors are eager and willing to accept it. It is the most foolish prejudice on the part of would-be contributors to imagine that such an article requires anything but its own merits to insure publication. I do not refer to novels of considerable length. It is very unlikely that a man should write a good novel without having already written good short stories. The *Scenes from Clerical Life* preceded *Adam Bede*. And if the good novel *has* been written, the author requires no advice from me: he is a would-be contributor no longer. On the contrary, the would-be editors write to him. He has gained a very considerable height upon the ladder both of fame and fortune. Perhaps this is too gorgeous a figure by which to express the thing accomplished. If so, I withdraw it. I endeavour to be as practical as possible. I purposely put out of sight the higher aims. I am not looking at the Principles of success in Literature from Mr. Lewes's stand-point. I am writing a guide-book for would-be contributors.

Yes: of course Fiction is by far the most remunerative branch of our calling. Even now, its gains are respectable; in some cases, what certain journals denounce as "enormous;" although in no case—not in that of persons of genius, to whom all of us are indebted for laughter or for tears, for aspirations, for instruction, for all sorts of benefit—in no case, I repeat, is this grudging remuneration equal to what scores of men in other paths of life (whose place, if they fell in the struggle to-day or to-morrow, could be filled up with as good a substitute) are accustomed to receive. It will not be so a generation or two hence. When the law of copyright is established in America, the English novelist will be a merchant-prince. Even now, what an improvement has taken place in his prospects, through periodical literature! I have said that there are about twenty respectable periodicals in London alone; the adjective is a vague one; I will write twenty periodicals that pay their novelists. The prices are very various; one pays, or did pay (for the praiseworthy experiment has not been repeated) 7000*l.* for a work of fiction: 5000*l.*, 4000*l.*,

2500*l.* ("in two places," as the auctioneers say), 2000*l.*, 1500*l.*, 1000*l.*, 800*l.*, 500*l.*, 350*l.*, 300*l.*, 200*l.*, 150*l.*, 100*l.*, down perhaps to 50*l.* Most of these sums I know, from my own personal knowledge, to have been paid for novels within the last ten years by various magazines. All of these periodicals have had novels continuously passing through their pages during that period. Imagine, therefore, the sums paid for that branch of literature.

Forgive me, good would-be contributors, if I have made your mouths water. It is not given to everybody (I am glad to say) to compete with these gentry, who are skilled to

Make the thing that is not as the thing that is,

Be not too covetous of such a position. There are lees in the successful novelists' wine-cup, believe me. There is a sect called *Saturday Reviewers* who have (vainly) sworn to extirpate them, and who do actually ill-use them in a most inhuman manner. I am the last person (as I have shown, I hope) to wish to see you robbed of your just dues; but

don't be offensively greedy after money. To write to an editor, as *many* do, coolly requesting to know what are his usual rates of remuneration, is a piece of gross impertinence. If he has accepted any paper of yours, that is another matter: you may intend to put your own price upon it, and not to let it go for less; although, if I was in your place (and I am quite familiar with the position) I think I should not make such an inquiry at all: but having received the fruit of my labour at his hands, and found it insufficient, simply work for him no more. Sometimes—not to speak of the Dignity of Labour—folks get better paid than they expect.

It does not occur to me to give you any further advice. I have told you what to do, and (particularly) what not to do. The rest of the matter lies in your hands. I do not say "*Never* despair;" because, after experiencing many rejections from more than one periodical, and acceptance *nowhere*, the truth should begin to dawn upon you that Literature is not the vocation for which either art or nature has intended you. But on the other hand, do not be easily discouraged. The

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object of imitation I recommend to all would-be contributors with anything really in them is Bruce's spider. Their motto should be, "Better luck next Time."

BOOKS.

HOW unequally are what are called the Realities of Life distributed ! Hunger and Cold, and their opposites, Plenty and comfortable Warmth, form the chief experiences of the vast majority of the human race, and constitute all they know, or almost all, of adversity or of prosperity. Whereas, with the minority, how little do these matters enter into their minds. They take no thought for the morrow, what they shall eat or what they shall drink, nor yet for their garments, what they shall put on ; for they have never felt any lack of such things. Their very prayer, " Give us this day our daily bread," has no literal signification. Again, how material is the existence of the illiterate rich, compared with that of the studious, or even the refined. Hunting and Shooting, or the pleasures of the Town, comprehend nearly all the narrow

round of life of the former ; an existence, however, at least practical and active. On the other hand, it is astonishing to reflect how little of what is termed real life falls to the lot of the latter.

One who is fond of literature, even though he may not be a student, is not—knowingly—in this world above a third of the actual number of his years. Eight of his daily hours are given to sleep, and eight at least—what with reading and reflection—are passed in a world peopled by the creatures of the imagination.* No astronomer, whose patient mind is so set upon the wonders of the skies, that his familiarity with them is greater than with the things of the earth, is more unsphered—more separated from actual life—than is the boarding-school miss entranced by the pages of a novel. She is sitting upon the sea-shore, perhaps, the cynosure of neighbouring eyes ; her future husband may be regarding her critically through a spy-glass, from the

* If he passes the remaining eight, or half of them, in doing good to his fellow-creatures, there will, alas ! be few of the less thoughtful entitled to cast a stone at him upon that account.

far-off jetty ; her mother may be sitting by her side, pretending to knit, but secretly absorbed in admiration of her beloved daughter, and full of plans for her future. The round of life goes on around her. The fisherman is returning from his nightly labours upon the deep, or mending his nets upon the strand. Parties of pleasure are setting forth on horseback or in boats. The church-bell is tolling on the hill. A great ship is passing by, crowded with emigrants, to meet her doom, perhaps, somewhere in yonder illimitable sea. But the girl with the book is conscious of none of these things, whether they concern herself or others. She is living in another scene, under other circumstances, and surrounded by quite a different set of people. She is no longer a boarding-school miss, home for the holidays. She is married to a man who is laying schemes to murder her ; or she is the murderess herself, full of the direst plans ; or she is an old woman, calmly dying with her dear ones around her, and it is the parting with them, but not the meeting with death, that makes her weep. She does not *seem* to be plotted against, or to devise wicked schemes against others, or to die ; but she actually *is* for the time in one or

other of the very circumstances. Those are real tears which course down her beautiful cheeks, and fall upon the enchanted page. No one can seriously aver, except in the most physical sense, that while the charm holds her, the girl is a denizen of this world at all. She is alive, indeed, for her blood circulates, and her bosom falls and rises, but she is alive to nothing on earth. The scenes with which she concerns herself never existed ; the people about her are not even shadows, like Mr. Pepper's ghosts—they are only shadows of shadows, reflections from imaginary forms ; and yet, while she reads, her existence is passed among them solely. . It is not necessary to make any strictures here upon the wickedness of novel-reading. There are some novels, of course, which would do that girl more harm than opium, and much in the same way—clogging the wheels of action, and making the whole human machine unfit for the plain high-road of life ; and there are others, again, which, condensing the knowledge of human life into a few pages, impart the wisdom which a hundred personal experiences might be too few to teach her ; or again, which setting before her the example of high and steadfast

purpose, of duty, and of charity, invigorate and fortify the soul. What I would speak of now is merely the engrossing and all absorbing quality of books. Reflection itself, of course, possesses the same attribute, in a less degree; but we cannot sit down to reflect at a moment's notice—deeply or earnestly enough to forget what is passing around us—and be perfectly sure of doing it, any more than we can be sure of going to sleep when we wish to do so.

Now, a congenial book can be taken up by any lover of books, with the certainty of its transporting the reader within a few minutes to a region immeasurably removed from that which he desires to quit. The shape or pattern of the magic carpet whereon he flies through space and time, is of no consequence. The son of science is rapt by a problem; the philosopher by an abstruse speculation; the antiquary is carried centuries back into the chivalric past; the lover of poetry is borne upon glittering wings above things earthly. The charm works well for all. Books are the blessed chloroform of the mind. We wonder how folks in trouble did without them in old time, just as our descendants

will wonder how men, women, and children bore to see their limbs sawn off without the Lethe-balm which the mere smelling to a sponge can bestow. Action was not always possible, even to the warrior, and still less to the warrior's wife ; there were years of peace : there were long nights,—nights, too, of unmitigated darkness—wherein their sorrows must have made themselves felt indeed ; yet they could never “take up a book”—that is a phrase in common use among even those of us who are least given to reading—and wile the dreary hours away. It is not a very high claim that is here set forth on behalf of Literature—that of Pass-time, and yet what a blessed boon even that is ! Conceive the hours of *inertia* (a thing different from idleness) that it has consumed for us ! hours wherein nothing could be done, nothing, perhaps, be *thought* of our own selves, by reason of some impending calamity. Wisely does the dentist furnish his hateful antechamber with books of all sorts. Who could abide for an hour in such an apartment with nothing to occupy his thoughts save the expectation of that wrench to come ! Whatever makes you forget an impending surgical operation—even


though it be tooth-drawing—will make you forget anything. This may seem derogatory to the majesty and disinterestedness of the human mind, but it is undoubtedly true. A great and wise man has told us that no philanthropist would be so much kept awake at night by the news that the empire of China, with its third of the human race or so, had been swallowed up by the sea, as by the knowledge that he was to have the tip of his *own* little finger amputated before breakfast.

And, indeed, it must be confessed that where Books fail as an anodyne, it is rather in cases of physical than of mental pain. Through the long watches of the night, and by the bedside of some slowly dying dear one, it is easier to obtain forgetfulness—the only kind of rest that it may be safe or possible to take—by means of reading, than to do so when one is troubled with mere toothache. Nor does this arise from selfishness—since we would endure twenty toothaches, if they might give ease to the sufferer—but because the sharpness of the pang prevents our applying our mind to anything else; while the deep dull sorrow of the soul permits an intervening thought, and over it

slides another, and then another, until a layer of such is formed, and the mind of the reader gets wholly free, for a brief but blessed time, partitioned off, as it were, from his real trouble.

Grief must have its way, but not *all* its way, and there is a time when even the consolations of Religion may be intermitted with advantage, and the heart be suffered to lie fallow, wholly disengaged from any subject that concerns itself. This is not the place to speak of the supreme blessedness of the Book of Books; but the benefits which *it* imparts are totally different from, as they are infinitely greater than, those which flow from books in general. True, it mitigates, comforts, elevates—works unspeakable good every way—but it does not prevent that self-consciousness, the abrogation of which we are just now alone considering, so much as do other kinds of books, into which, perhaps, devotion hardly enters at all.

I am writing of the obligation which we owe to Literature, and not to Religion; yet I cannot but feel “thankful”—using the word in its ordinary and devotional sense—to many a book which is no sermon, nor tract, nor commentary, nor anything



of that kind at all. Thus, I have cause to revere the name of Defoe, who reached his hand down through a century and a half to wipe away bitter tears from my childish eyes. The going back to school was always a dreadful woe to me, casting its black shadow far into the latter part of my brief holidays. I have had my share of suffering and sorrow since, like other men, but I have seldom felt so absolutely wretched as when, a little boy, I was about to exchange my pleasant home-life for the hardships and uncongenialities of school. Vain, as black Monday approached, were the increased tenderesses of my mother; the "treats" devised to cheat me of forebodings dire; you might as well have spread a banquet for some wretched doomed one upon the scaffold, and asked him to sit down and eat, forgetful of "the drop," because you had covered it decently with a damask table-cloth. And yet, I protest, I had but to take up *Robinson Crusoe*, and in a very few minutes I was out of all thought of the approaching calamity; Dr. Birch and his young friends (who were not mine) loomed no more in the near horizon. I had travelled over a thousand leagues of sea; I was in my snug well-

fortified cave, with the ladder upon the right side of it, "so that neither man nor beast could get at me," with my half-a-dozen muskets loaded, and my powder distributed in separate parcels, so that not even a thunderbolt should do me any irreparable injury. Or, if not quite so secure, I was visiting my summer plantation among my goats and corn, or shooting, in the still astonished woods, birds of marvellous beauty; or lying upon my stomach upon the top of the hill, watching through my spy-glass the savages putting to sea, and not displeased to find myself once more alone in my own little island. No living human being could just then have done me such a service as dead Defoe, unless, perhaps, it had been Dr. Birch himself, by dying opportunely, and thereby indefinitely proroguing that fatal re-assembling day.

Again, during that agonising period which intervened between my proposal of marriage by letter to Jemima Anne, and my reception of her reply, how should I ever have kept myself alive save for the chivalrous aid of the Black Knight in *Ivanhoe*. To him, mainly, assisted by Rebecca and (I am bound to say) by that scoundrel Brian

de Bois Guilbert, are my obligations due, that I did not—through the extremities of despair and hope, suffered during that interval—become a drivelling idiot.

When her answer did arrive—in the negative—what was it which preserved me from the noose, the razor, or the stream, but Mr. Carlyle's *French Revolution*. In the woes of poor Louis Capet, I forgot my own; in the just indignation of his unhappy wife,* I ceased to dwell upon the cruel manner in which Jemima Anne had "led me on;" and, finally, in the narration of Carrier's *Noyades*, that false maiden sank from my memory, wholly "scuttled," so to speak, in the tide of rushing Loire. Who, having a grateful heart, can forget these things, or deny the Blessedness of Books? If it were only for the hours of weary waiting which they have consumed for me at desolate railway stations, I pay them grateful homage. But for them, I should have gone mad with the contemplation of Time Tables, and advertisements of

* " *Vous êtes tous des scélérats !*" cried she to the Municipal Guard through her woman's tears.

Thorley's Food for Cattle, and *Beds*, sent free by post, scores and scores of times; but for them, I should have been worse even than I have been upon many a packet's deck, for it is good to keep one's mind employed, when the physical interior is menaced with anarchy and general overturn; but for them, the hours would often have dragged very drearily with me, when flying on the wings of steam—yet far too slowly—towards home, and wife, and children.

Nay, under far more serious circumstances, when disappointment has lain heavy on my soul, and once when ruin itself seemed overshadowing me and mine, what escape have I not found from irremediable woes in taking the hand of Samuel Johnson (kindly introduced to that great man by Mr. Boswell), and hearing him discourse with wondrous wisdom upon all things under heaven, sometimes at a club of wits and men of letters, and sometimes at a common tavern table, and sometimes even in an open boat upon the Hebridean seas.

I often think, if such be the fascination exercised by books upon their readers, how wondrous

must be the enchantment wrought upon the Writers themselves! What human sorrow can afflict, what prosperity dazzle them, while they are describing the fortunes of the offspring of their own imagination? They have only to close their study door, and take their magic pen in hand, and lo! they are at once transported from this weary world of duns, and critics, and publishers, into whatever region and time they will. Yes, truly, it is for authors themselves, more than for any other order of men whatever, to acknowledge the Blessedness of Books.

THE END.

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